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INDIAN SPIRITUALITY

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INDIAN SPIRITUALITY

*The Travels and Teachings
of Sivanarayan*

by

MOHINI MOHAN CHATTERJI

London

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EDITORIAL PREFACE

PART I of this volume was published in Calcutta in 1907. It was recently handed to me with Part II to be edited and revised that it might, in an extended form, be reprinted and intercede for the wider circulation it deserves. The author's mother tongue is not English; but he has unusual command over it, so that I have deemed it inadvisable to make many changes in the original printed text and the new written sheets.

Mohini M. Chatterji was at one time well known in this country in the role of a public speaker. To-day he is best remembered for his translation of and commentary on *The Bhagavad Gita*. Mr. G. R. S. Mead, the editor of *The Quest*, tells me that he first met him in the summer of 1884, when he was lecturing in England for the Theosophical Society. But this book is not exactly the expression of his one-time theosophical views, for he severed his connection with the society somewhere before the year 1888. Mr. Mead writes: 'He was a good Sanskrit scholar and well read in Indian philosophy, to the study of which he introduced me'. He spent several years in England and is still living.

It would be presumption on my part to say much about this wise, informing book. It will speak for itself. It introduces us to a varied world little understood by Westerners—one of pure vision in conflict with narrow superstitions; one of shrewd discernment probing strange manners and modes of life, India and her needs, her jostling religions and attitudes of mind. The book appears to be not only a sort of well-spring of the spiritual, but also a crowded bird's-eye view of India. The mass of the people of India dwell in darkness; nevertheless we have to realize that in the same country live many men like Sivanarayan and Chatterji. In the midst of the darkness there shines a great light.

This book unveils the spiritual insight and profound broodings of a tranquil and unworldly mind. May success minister to it.

HERBERT E. PALMER.

ST. ALBANS,

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

THE ensuing pages are put forth in the hope that they will not be refused welcome by those interested in a spiritual survey of India, those in search of spiritual light, those warring with errors and superstitions, which rob man's arm of strength, his heart of sympathy, and his soul of God.

The substance of this volume has, in different forms, seen the light in some of the Indian vernaculars.

In view of the unfamiliar names and expressions occurring in the text, a glossary is given at the end, which, it is believed, will prove useful.

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PART I
TRAVELS

CHAPTER I

Parentage — Early instruction — Brahminical thread — Holy ascetics — Breaking off ties — Renunciation of caste — At service — Rāmpore Boālia — Fighting pundits.

SIVANARAYAN, who in time came to be known as the Paramhansa Sivanarayan Swāmi, was born in a Brahmin family, near Benares. His father was named Vyāsdeva, his mother Gangā Devi. He was one of a family of four sons. Further particulars of his birth and family are not known.

At the age of five years the thought constantly arose in his mind: 'Who am I? What is my real nature? People speak of God, but who is He? Where was I before I was born, and whither have I to go? What is there for me to do?' Sometimes he would ask himself: 'Who has made this body of mine with its organs and faculties of action and sensation? I or my parents? If I made it, why is it I do not remember my own act, and why is it I cannot unmake the body at will, and why, above all, am I perplexed with doubts concerning all these things?'

One day, troubled by his anxious thoughts, the boy Sivanarayan spoke to his mother: 'Did

you make this body of mine, or did somebody else make it? If somebody else, show me that person'. The question sorely grieved the mother. 'Alas!' she thought in her tears, 'what if my little child should lose his mind!' Turning to her son Lakhshmi Narayan, she asked him to fetch the father to see what had come over the child.

The father was perplexed. He scolded Sivanarayan for talking nonsense, and sent him to the family schoolmaster, himself teaching the boy at the same time the practice of devotion according to certain rules. Sivanarayan obeyed his father. But his love of learning could not keep pace with his zeal for the practice of religion. In the result he gained inwardly in strength, truth, and joy, and received constant attention from the schoolmaster's rod.

The pedagogic discipline forced many thoughts on Sivanarayan's mind. 'I can well see,' he reflected, 'the fruits of learning. The teacher sees not what is in my mind, but is busy in dealing out punishment. The learned and unlearned alike eat, drink, and die. The only difference I see is that the well-instructed man can discriminate between truth and error, and thus perform his temporal and spiritual duties better than the ignorant man. Else what good is there in learning which can only bring as its reward money and worldly position? The learned and unlearned are equally ignorant of what preceded

birth and what follows death, and in deep spiritual slumber the learned know not their learning and the unlearned their want of it.'

Sivanarayan received his Brahminical ~~thread~~ between eight and nine years of age. 'Why have my parents,' he thought, 'put round my neck strings of thread like the halter of a domestic beast? God has not ordained this. Else would He have created the Brahmin's thread along with the limbs of his body. The wise will never mistake it for a gift from God. This is merely a distinction, imagined by man, like the dyed garments of the religious mendicant. If, putting aside these outer things, the eye is turned to the body of flesh and blood and the subtle faculties of action and sensation that work in and through that body, all are seen to be alike and the distinctions disappear.' To avoid giving pain, Sivanarayan kept his thoughts to himself, and persevered in the practice of devotion, leaving a future day to decide the question of the holy thread. Hearing people speak of the holiness of religious ascetics — sādhus and mahātmās — Sivanarayan sought for opportunities of meeting them. One day he heard that a great and holy Mahātmā had arrived in the village. Having approached him with humility Sivanarayan laid before him, when alone, the questionings of his boyish mind.

'What is an ascetic, whom men variously

call *sādhu*, *sannyāsi*, and *mahātmā*?' asked Sivanarayan. 'What thing is indicated by these names? The limbs and members of the body are the same in an ascetic as in a householder. The organs of sensation and action are also the same in both. What peculiar thing, then, is an ascetic? If speech be that thing, it equally belongs to the householder. If being daubed with mud and ashes constitutes the ascetic, then hogs and buffaloes can claim that name. If long, matted hair (*jatā*) constitutes the ascetic, then an ancient banyan is entitled to that epithet. Is it red, black, or white which men call an ascetic? Be so kind as to remove my doubts. Men say you are a great ascetic, but why do they say so? What is it, after all?'

The man of ascetic holiness in great wrath raised his stick over the boy, but gave him only a slap or two.

'You were born only yesterday,' he said, 'and you want to make fun of me.'

Sivanarayan tried to soothe him by further humility, but was chased away with blows. A complaint was made to the father, who admonished the boy in the orthodox fashion, with cuffs and slaps. Sivanarayan found by experience great renouncers of the world were often great men of wrath. To put a doubt before them for solution was an unfailing source of hard knocks and harder words.

Some time thereafter a sādhu who was cast in a different mould came to the place. He was gentle in manner and speech, of a joyous and radiant nature, truth-loving, just, and devoted to God. Sivanarayan questioned him as he had questioned the others. With sweet gentleness, he asked who had put such doubts into the boy's mind. Learning that the doubts arose of themselves, untaught by man, he declared his inability to remove them.

'He who has raised the doubts,' he said, 'will in His own good time remove them.'

He spoke in praise of Sivanarayan and the family in which he was born, and bowed down to him with respect. The boy in his turn bowed down to the holy man and returned home.

'You have four sons,' Sivanarayan said to his parents one day; 'amongst them I am one. Consider me as dead. By the command of the All-Comprehending God, I have to remove from the world its heavy burden of suffering. A constraint has been laid on me to work for the welfare of all. Permit me to engage in this work.'

'You are but a child,' they said, 'how can it be possible for you to accomplish what you propose to do? You must kill us before we let you go.'

'What you say is true,' replied Sivanarayan; 'what power have I to take away the world's burden? I am only the instrument. God will

guide me to the accomplishment of the end appointed by Him. Put not your love on me. Let me go.'

'Can parents,' said they, 'send their child away? Besides, you are a backward child, and have made but little progress in learning. How can anything be done by you?'

'My learning,' replied Sivanarayan, 'is God, who rules all hearts. I have no need to gain external knowledge.'

But the parents would not part with their child. The human parent refused permission to grant what the Divine Parent enjoined. God was the God of all, and to obey Him was to obey all—thus thinking, the boy of twelve quitted, in the dead of night, his childhood's home for ever.

The homeless wanderer of tender years constantly asked himself: 'Whither shall I go first? What wants, in different parts of the country, are troubling men of high and low degrees? How can those wants be removed? What will induce men to look on all with equal love and see the one God in all? Whatever will make all men, complex and simple, learned and unlearned, monks and householders, happy by the fulfilment of their temporal and spiritual needs, it is my duty to accomplish'. He perpetually prayed to the All-Comprehending Complete Being, who is expressed as Light, for the en-

lightenment of a world buried in darkness. He prayed that hate, contention, and strife might disappear from amongst all creatures, and that the world might rejoice for ever.

Finding him roving over the country with no apparent purpose, men would ask him whether he was a sādhu or a householder, of what caste he was, had he studied the Vedas or was he illiterate, and so forth. In reply he would say he was devoid of learning, ignorant of the Vedas, did not know what a sādhu or a householder was. 'All I know,' he used to say, 'is that I am a man like you, possessed of similar faculties, limbs, and organs. I am investigating this mass of flesh and bone, and should I find in it what you call caste I shall communicate to you the discovery.'

'How is it,' someone asked, 'that wearing the sacred thread you can't say what your caste is?'

'What of that?' replied Sivanarayan. 'You too are wearing a piece of cloth made of thread. Is caste a name for thread?'

Afterwards he found within himself as the true Brahminical thread the soul presiding over the threefold powers (*gunas*),¹ going forth like three strands of strings, and called by men Brahmā, Vishnu, and Siva; he found the three

¹ Prakriti or Nature is the totality of God's powers, divisible into three classes—cognitive, active, and resistive. Each of these classes is called a *guna*, which means literally a string.

strands tied together into five knots, known as the five elements (*tattwas*). The same One, expressed as Light, he found intelligently working as the life-breath in the nostrils, in the ears as *ākāsa* or the faculty of hearing, and so forth. He then took off the Brahminical thread, believed in by man, and hung it up on the branch of a tree.

In the course of his itinerary Sivanarayan came to Bengal. One day, having asked for food to support life, he was advised by a gentleman to work for his livelihood, and feel ashamed to beg.

‘It is true,’ said Sivanarayan, ‘a wise man ought to earn his livelihood by his own labour. But I am in the service of a Master who owns the universe. Still, I am willing to serve you, if you will employ me.’

‘If you are in God’s service,’ the gentleman remarked, ‘then how is it that you are obliged to beg? Can He not find you food?’

Sivanarayan replied that if one has firm faith in God all wants are fulfilled. The gentleman offered him Rs. 2 a month for wages, besides food and clothes, and ordered him to take his place among the doorkeepers. He accepted the service, but refused the wages. In surprise the gentleman inquired if he had no parents to whom the money would be useful. He did not reply, but begged to be allowed to let the matter stand over until the end of his employment.

At the slightest hint Sivanarayan did all that

was required of him, whether menial or otherwise. His employer was glad he had found a servant who worked better than the others and cost nothing but his keep. After two or three months Sivanarayan secretly left, and at Rāmpore Boālia entered the service of a merchant named Devidās. Finding him retiring, reticent, correct in his accounts, managing the dispatch of goods with unusual economy and promptitude, never attempting to shirk work, the merchant used to call him a fool, ignorant of the world, but believed him to be of gentle birth.

Devidās was in the habit of using foul language to all with whom he came in contact. One day he showered on a servant unusually coarse abuse. Sivanarayan, who was present, said in all humility, with joined palms:¹ 'You are in the position of a father to me, being my employer. Be not offended at my words, but pardon my boldness. Listen to me kindly. You are the master and these are your servants; they earn their bread under your protection. Though poor, they are respectable. Make them work by inducing them with pleasant words. It hurts their feelings to be abused for every trifle. Suppose they were rich and you poor, and suppose they abused you as you are abusing them, how would you feel?

¹ This attitude of humility is perhaps reminiscent of a time when a man in approaching another had to show his want of weapons in order to secure a friendly reception.

Wealth does not last for ever, troubles come to all, at one time or another. Wealth does not accompany us into the world nor go with us out of it'.

Devidas waxed wroth, and with the rankest abuse drove away Sivanarayan from his house. The merchant was not to blame, thought Sivanarayan; the intoxication of wealth and power had taken away his judgment and hardened his heart. The wise alone, though blessed with all that the world esteems, can hold their hearts in God and work for the good of all with a sober understanding and peaceful contentment.

Sivanarayan retired to a solitary spot on the Padmā and sat down by the water's edge, abstaining from all sustenance except the river-water. In a little while this was reported abroad. Devidās with several pundits came to him and, unsuccessfully, tried to dissuade him from the course he had adopted. They offered to feed him there or elsewhere as might be desired, and cited the authority of the Shāstras against the practice of severe austerities. Devidās's death, which quickly followed, was superstitiously ascribed to the curse of Sivanarayan, who, in consequence, decided to leave the place.

Wandering in obscure and unimportant places he could benefit only a few people. By the support of some powerful prince or pundit, his object might be gained. But the bent of mind

of princes, pundits, and common people had grown much alike. With equal readiness they fled from words of truth and the path of righteousness as if from evil. But as God, the Ruler of hearts, had given him his work to do, he decided to approach the Raja of Benares, who protected a large assembly of pundits.

Before leaving Rāmpore Boālia, Sivanarayan witnessed a fight between pundits. The town contains a temple belonging to sannyāsis of the Bhārati order. In the idol's room two pundits were engaged in Shāstric disputation. One of the pundits was from Benares, the other from Ghāzipore. In course of the disputation the Benares pundit accused his opponent of using an ungrammatical expression. In anger the other offered to lay a bet of Rs. 25, and have the matter referred to the decision of a conclave of pundits at Benares. But he would not accept a bet above Rs. 5. The dispute waxed hot. From words they came to blows.

The Ghāzipore pundit excelled in wrestling, and soon, mounting on his antagonist's chest, dared him to repeat the accusation. Both the combatants overlooked the fact that their violent movements had upset the idols and set them rolling on the floor. The sight enraged the attendant priest.

'You rascals!' he shouted; 'you are having a learned disputation, but what have my gods

done that you have reduced them to such a plight?’

The priest was ready to enforce his remonstrance with a stout stick. Overcome by such a powerful argument, the Benares pundit yielded the point, and finally put his recantation into writing at the victor’s dictation. Sivanarayan sought to pacify them both.

‘Such results,’ he said, ‘always ensue from attending to mere words in exclusion of the substance indicated by them. If it is desired to indicate the thing called water, it is immaterial, so long as the thing is perceived, whether the term used is grammatical or not. Grammar is not man’s master. Understanding all things in this way, let men perform their duties temporal and spiritual, and they will attain to blessedness.’

CHAPTER II

The Raja of Benares—His pundit—Hindu gods—The Rām-nagar Mohunt—Bāruni at Benares—Mother Gangā—Viswanāth.

IT was morning. At Rāmangar, Sivanarayan stood at the palace gate of the Raja of Benares. A tattered sheet of cloth was wrapped round him, and in other respects his appearance was not without a suggestion of the madman.

‘Tell the Raja,’ he said to the gatekeeper, ‘a man desires to converse with him concerning God. Let him not fear any begging petition.’

‘Vagabonds like you,’ said the Raja’s retainer, ‘are coming and going in numbers. For how many am I to carry messages? Besides, the man whose duty it is to announce visitors is not here at present. When he comes he may do what you want.’

For three parts of the day Sivanarayan sat at the Raja’s gate, unnoticed. At last one of the personal attendants of the Raja came to the gate, and he repeated his request. The servant returned after a time, and in the Raja’s name asked Sivanarayan for an account of himself. He only repeated what he had said to the gatekeeper, and

the servant went away. In a little while a pundit came from the Raja and asked the stranger what religion he had adopted. In reply Sivanarayan asked what substance was called religion and into how many classes it was divided.

‘I am,’ said the pundit, ‘speaking of the religion of the four orders of men, *Brahmachāri* or celibate student, *Grihastha* or householder, *Vānaprastha* or forest-dweller, and *Sannyāsi* or wandering friar.’

‘You are merely repeating what you have read in books about the four orders. I too have committed to memory what the books say. But how can you know whether I practise the religion I profess? You can’t tell it by any external mark on my body. If flesh, bones, or the limbs and faculties of man be called by the name of *sannyāsi*, then all men, being possessed of them, would be equally entitled to that name.’

‘The great-souled *sannyāsis* can be known by the characteristics given in the *Shāstras*.’

‘But how can you know the heart of a man who has created in himself those external characteristics?’

‘Somehow or other the heart can be known. But let that pass. Are you learned in Sanskrit, have you studied any *Shāstras*? ’

‘Very little do I know of Sanskrit or the *Shāstras*,’ said Sivanarayan, smiling at the test he was put to.

‘Do you believe in Durgā, Siva, Vishnu, and the other gods and goddesses?’

‘Why,’ asked Sivanarayan, ‘do you put this question? I believe in everything, and yet believe not. It behoves us to consider with discrimination what and where the substance is that is called gods and goddesses. If they transcend all forms, being formless, attributeless (*Nirākāra, Nirguna*), Brahma or Supreme Being, they cannot be perceived by the senses. The five *tattwas* or elements and the sun and moon are present before us, and are Brahma manifested in form (*Sākāra, Saguna*). Besides what is named, nothing else is, was, or can be. I believe in the All-Comprehending, Complete, Supreme Being who is formless and expressed in, and as the forms. If your gods and goddesses are distinct from that Being and yet real, tell me what they are, or show them to me; then I shall believe.’

‘Vishnu is in Vaikuntha, Brahmā in his own sphere (*loka*), Siva, Durgā, and Kāli in Kailās, and at Benares. How shall I show them to you?’

‘If they live, each in his own house, how is the work of this universe, moving and stationary, carried on? If God is not within you, how will He know of your good and evil works, your joys and sorrows, and how will He take away the burden of your sufferings?’

‘In us He dwells in secret, but at Benares within the view of all.’

‘What substance,’ asked Sivanarayan, ‘is Benares, and in what form does Siva dwell there —as earth, stone, and wood, or in the human form? If he has put on the form of a man, surely you can show him; if he is stick, stone, and earth, he is everywhere. For no place exists where those things are not. Wood is easily destroyed by fire, but is Siva destroyed thereby? If the gods and goddesses exist as the five elements or as the light, called the sun and moon, there can be no reason for seeking them more in one place than in another. Learned sir, know your God, the Ruler of your being, Him, who is the soul, presiding over the three *gunas*, who is formless and possessed of forms, and expressed as Light. Of Him Brahmā, Vishnu, Siva, and many other names are imagined by man. He will remove all your errors and establish you in supreme joy. Fall into error no longer, nor drag others into it.’

The pundit retired, and what he said to the Raja is unknown. But it was evident from his manner that he was not without fear of his class losing their occupation if Sivanarayan’s words found acceptance.

Shortly after a palace officer came and ordered Sivanarayan away. He begged for a night’s shelter, and was threatened with the police. He was without food for two days, but the Raja and his retainers were unconcerned. Hungry and

thirsty, Sivanarayan was driven away from the great man's door.

Sivanarayan sat down on the steps leading into the tank, near where the festival of Rāmlilā is celebrated. A little way beyond was a *Mohunt* (abbot) with his disciple monks. The Raja entertained them daily with reverence.

'Who are you?' shouted one of the disciples as Sivanarayan approached the ascetic group; 'what brings you here?'

'I am a man, and seeing you are men I have come near you.'

'Everybody can see you are a man. But are you a householder or a sannyāsi?'

'I hear of a householder, I hear of a sannyāsi, but I don't know what thing it is that either term indicates.'

'Seize him and bring him to me,' cried the *Mohunt*, 'and I shall show him both.'

The master's mandate was carried out.

'You don't know,' exclaimed the *Mohunt*, 'a householder from a great-souled sannyāsi? Look round. Don't you see this assembly of the great-souled ones (*Mahātmās*)? We belong to the Sringeri Monastery (*Matha*), established by the renowned Sankarāchārya. Ten orders of monks were instituted by him bearing ten different names: "Giri", "Puri", "Bhārati", etc. We are *dandis* (staff-bearers) and belong to the sect with the ten names (*dasnāmis*). We have other

distinctions, such as *Chulā*¹ (fire-place), *Chāki*² (grinding-stone), and so forth. Besides, there are the orders founded by Rāmānuja, Madhvāchārya, Vishnuswāmi, and the others. You don't seem to know anything at all.'

'In the householder condition men bear as tails the distinctions of caste, family, and *gotra* (sept). But you, although a Mahātmā, have a long tail of distinctions. With your *gurus* (masters), and brethren through gurus, your families are exceedingly large. The householder's part seems the better.'

'You rascal!' thundered the Mohunt, 'how is the householder's the better part? The Brahmachāri is better than the householder, and the paramhansa the best of all. I have attained to that best position. How many times am I, then, superior to the householder?'

'Don't give way to anger,' said Sivanarayan; 'reflect soberly. When you were in the householder's condition you had the same physical body and faculties of action and sensation as you have now. Then, as now, you had to walk on the earth, you carried with you the five *tattwas* (elements) wherever you went. Then of what thing inherent in the householder did you disburden yourself in adopting a Brahmachāri's life? Of what other things have you been

¹ This distinction marks the group using the same kitchen.

² Exclusively used by a group of ascetics.

divested in the gradual progress to your present condition? What is the substance called *param-hansa*? Is it merely a figment of the mind? Have you renounced and accepted mere names? In the householder's condition yours was a life of attachment to external things. Now you have professed to adopt the life of detachment. See if you can make detachment your own. The man who, though a householder, can cling evenly to both forms of life is a hero. Cowards fly from the life of the world, unable to hear the outgoing impulses of the mind. In the two forms of life the difference is only one of conditions, qualities, and acts. The soul remains the same in all conditions, its real nature unchanged. If I have spoken words of untruth or unreason, instruct me, I pray.'

'Many words of unwisdom you have spoken. I will instruct you. Be my disciple. Many learned pundits and wealthy princes acknowledge me as master (*guru*).'

'What is a *guru* and what is a disciple, O *Mahātmā*?'

'You rascal! you don't know me, and want to teach me wisdom? I shall turn you into ashes.'

'You have shown me,' rejoined Sivanarayan, 'who you are. Nothing is impossible with you. Take a hair from my body and turn it to ashes first, and then do the same to me. How many have you turned to ashes already? O great-

souled one, is there a soul which can turn or be turned into ashes? If you cast aside the pride of Shastric learning and seek refuge in the All-Comprehending Supreme Being, expressed as Light, the true teacher and soul, you will have peace and dwell in everlasting joy. Walk the path of righteousness and errors will cease to trouble you.'

'Sir,' said the Mohunt, 'you have said much that is true and wise. Who may you be? Are you a monk or a paramhansa? I can see no distinctive marks on you.'

'How can I express in words who you are or I am? I am what I am. I can only say that I am a man, the same as you.'

'I have,' said he, 'spoken unworthily to you, but it was in ignorance. Out of your own goodness forgive me. I salute you exclaiming: *Om Namah Narayanay Namah*' ('Salutation to the All-Comprehending Being, the goal of man's existence'¹).

Summing up his experiences of this period Sivanarayan says: 'The ways and conversations of monks and pundits, princes and common people, are much alike. None desire God. With the pundit the first question is, "Can you expound the *Shāstras*?" If you say "Yes", a fruitless disputation is started, while abuse and ill-treatment follow a negative answer. Monks

¹ The usual formula of salutation between *sannyāsīs*.

drive away every one not of their order or not professing a knowledge of magic or alchemy. Princes want to know if you have become perfected. From one believed to be perfect they ask as boons male children and increase of wealth and power. If you say, "Is the soul of such a nature that it can be imperfect at one time and perfect at another? What has one to do with perfection or imperfection?" the consequence is instant expulsion. One cannot go amongst the common people without being asked for riches, children, or magical cures. None desire the All-Comprehending Supreme Being, expressed as Light, the parent of all. Such is the world's way.'

Another time Sivanarayan stayed at a house on the Ganges at Benares. It was the morning of the holy *Bāruni* day (the great bathing festival). Many pundits and other people of the better sort had gathered round him for instruction. When leaving they requested him to accompany them to the Ganges for a ceremonial bath.

'It is good,' he replied, 'to observe the bathing ceremony. But what good follows the observance must be carefully considered.'

'Mother Ganges,' struck in one of the pundits, 'washes away all sins, if bathed in on a day like this.'

'You call the Ganges your mother. Is it dutiful in a son to present his mother with the

uncleanness of his sins? Yield to her all the merits you prize, and she will take away all your sins and sorrows. But what is the Ganges? If formless, attributeless, and transcendent, she cannot be imaged by the mind or perceived by the senses. If at the opposite pole of being, she is the Virāt or God manifest whose expression is Light. Beside the Being in this dual aspect nothing is, was, or will be. If the Ganges is the same as water, one of the "limbs of the Virāt" (the constituents of the visible universe are so called), she is to be found everywhere. That water is a form of Nārāyan or God is commonly known.'

'You need not come to the Ganges,' the pundit rejoined; 'return after seeing the image of Viswanāth.'¹

'It is the duty of all,' said Sivanarayan, 'to see Viswanāth. Man has no other duty. On the authority of your scriptures the Viswanāth,² comprehending all things, moving and stationary, is the complete Being, Virāt, present within and outside all. He strings all that is upon threads of light, and by sending forth His influence is carrying on the world's work. Has He a fixed place of abode whither one has to go to see Him? Since, according to the scriptures, He is All-Comprehending, possessed of all powers and

¹ A form of Siva, the principal image at Benares.

² 'The Lord of the World.'

complete, then why, disregarding Him within you, should you go elsewhere for a sight of Him? If you have faith in the scriptures you need go nowhere. Without faith in the scriptures there is no Viswanāth to see. If stock or stone is imagined to be your Viswanāth I have no need to see it.'

'My Lord,' said one of the pundits, 'your words are true, but hard to receive, owing to the darkness within us.'

'Stay your hearts in the All-Comprehending Supreme Being, expressed as Light within and without, the Parent of all. He will make all things clear by promptings from within.'

CHAPTER III

Chaugain—The bridal party—Gathering mangoes by night—The Good Samaritan—Dumraon—The Raja—Nepal—Srinagar—To Amarnāth—The Garbha Yoni—The vision of Amarlinga—The return journey—The pot of milk between two ascetics—The spiritual Amarnāth.

CHAUGAIN is a village near Dumraon. The Zemindar's daughter is to be married after night-fall. The bridegroom has arrived with a retinue of horses and elephants, accompanied by a crowd of relatives and friends, to whom quarters are assigned in a garden-house. The Zemindar with his principal guests is standing outside the garden gate.

Arrived at the place, Sivanarayan addressed them, saying; 'You are busy about the wedding. Conversation touching spiritual matters would now be inopportune. I shall be in the garden somewhere. You can come to me when at leisure. My stay will be short.'

'I can't say, you rascal,' said the Zemindar, 'whether I shall come or not. There are many lunatics like you here'.

Sivanarayan wandered about in the garden looking on the bridal preparations. Several mahātmās were seated near the bridegroom's

father. One of the holy men drew that gentleman's attention to Sivanarayan, who, he suspected, was a thief on the prowl after valuables, and advised his being turned out. He was accordingly seized by two retainers and taken before the bridegroom's father.

'Who are you?' he asked.

'A man,' was the reply.

'Speak the truth, you rascal, or I shall have your bones broken.'

'What is the good of questioning a thief?' struck in a Mahātmā. 'Let him be turned out with a few cuffs.'

Orders were issued as advised, and the zealous servants drove him out with blows.

It so happened that a severe storm then burst upon the place. In the garden-house chandeliers were broken, food spoilt, and branches torn off the trees, much to the discomfort of the wedding guests.

Two miles away Sivanarayan sought shelter under a mango-tree. The place was strewn with broken branches and fallen mangoes. People came out of the village to gather the fruit. To prevent alarm Sivanarayan shouted out: 'Don't be afraid. I am a man'. All the more frightened, some raised a cry of 'thief', and others of 'ghost'. Men rushed out with cudgels, shouting: 'Beat him, beat him!' Seeing them so ignorant, Sivanarayan said: 'Fear not. I am a sādhu'. They

came to him and heard his instructions with gladness. After doing him reverence they went about mango-picking.

A little boy of eight or nine years, son of a Gossain,¹ stayed behind. With joined palms he asked Sivanarayan whence he had come, and if he had had anything to eat. Hearing he had fasted the whole day, the boy pressed the hospitality of his family on Sivanarayan.

'Little father,' said the latter, 'I don't enter a village by night. You go home. I shall get food somewhere when the day comes. Be not anxious on my account.'

The boy left in silence, and after some time returned with his mother and sister. The two miles of road they had to walk were heavy and sodden with rain, and full of obstructions caused by the storm. Unmindful of inconveniences, the good mother was happy in offering the fasting stranger a simple repast of milk and fruit. She begged Sivanarayan, because of the bad night, to accept the shelter of her house.

'Go back to your home, mother,' said he. 'Hold your thoughts steadfast in the All-Comprehending Supreme Being, manifested as Light, and He will take away all your troubles.'

The mother and children saluted Sivanarayan and left.

Next day Sivanarayan appeared before the

¹ A spiritual guide of the Vaishnava sect.

palace gate of Dumraon. The heir-apparent went away in a palanquin to enjoy the fresh air of the garden. In a little while the Maharaja came out, whom Sivanarayan addressed, saying: 'Be collected, Maharaja, and listen. I have a word to say'.

'Can't you,' said the Maharaja in anger, turning to his attendants, 'can't you keep away such importunate beggars from my presence?'

Taking the hint, one of the retainers gripped and pushed Sivanarayan by the neck, which violence caused his turban to fall down. This increased his rage, which he vented on Sivanarayan in kicks and cuffs of unusual vigour. The Maharaja was pleased with the ready zeal of his retainer.

'No blame,' thought Sivanarayan, 'attaches to these poor princes. Their spirit and intelligence must conform to the nature of the stocks and stones they worship. Had they been worshippers of the Supreme Being, expressed as Light within and without, the teacher and soul of all, their minds would have been illuminated by wisdom and their hearts quickened by benevolence. Then they would have known themselves and me.'

Providing himself with the necessary permit, Sivanarayan slowly worked his way to the capital of Nepal. Meeting one of the princes as he issued from the palace, Sivanarayan accosted

him: 'O Prince, listen attentively'. The Prince turned aside, directing an official to send away the mendicant with a small alms of money. All princes were equally blind. Sivanarayan passed Ekdanda and Sessagadi, reaching Jwalamukhi by the hill route. He proceeded to Hardwar, and thence walked on to Jammu, where he did not find the Maharaja of Kashmir, who had previously left for Srinagar.

Sivanarayan arrived at Srinagar, passing the town of Mattan on the way. Within the palace precincts he found the junior Dewan distributing to sādhus and beggars the necessaries for their pilgrimage to Amarnath. When this was over, he asked the official to obtain for him a short interview with the Maharaja.

'Are you,' asked the Dewan, 'a sādhu, sannyāsi, or pundit that the Maharaja shall grant you an audience? Had you been a sādhu or sannyāsi your wearing apparel would have been dyed brown and your neck garlanded with *rudrāksha* beads. But I find none of these distinctive marks on you. If you be a pundit repeat some *slokas* (verses) from the Shāstras you have studied. An interview with the Maharaja is impossible without Sanskrit learning. Mendicant paupers like you come and go every day. If you wish to visit Amarnāth I shall give you the customary two rupees and a sufficient dole of rice and pulse.'

'Why,' said Sivanarayan, 'is there need to know if I am learned or unlearned, sādhu or not? I only desire to see the Maharaja to point out to him how Creation suffers, and instruct him concerning God. Whether princes and learned men see me or not—it is nothing to me personally. I do not lose or gain thereby.'

'Return after some days and I shall get you an interview.'

'I shall go away in a day or two.'

'Please yourself,' said the official, ending the conversation.

Sivanarayan departed from the city and sat down by the roadside. Strings of pilgrims to Amarnāth, ascetics and laymen, passed by. Accepting it as in God's scheme he joined the crowd. Obtaining the necessary supplies at Mattan, where the journey was broken, the march to Amarnāth was resumed. Every night the pilgrims camped out in the woods which skirted the road. Some of the accompanying pāndās¹ or priestly guides would at times start in advance and, near some mountain spring, dig a small pool, scattering wild flowers round it. As the procession drew near they would recite the sacred glories of the pool, where, by offering in worship from $2\frac{1}{2}$ annas to Rs. $1\frac{1}{4}$, the devotee could secure the choice of Siva or Vishnu's

¹ Inferior priests, attached to holy Hindu shrines, who act as guides to pilgrims and temple attendants.

heaven. Thus the pāndās gained money, and the believers lost their reason.

At one place some of the pāndās ascended an eminence, and placing one stone on another declared: 'Whoso will do likewise and give alms of money will acquire more merit on this spot than anywhere else on earth'. Between two and three thousand pilgrims, ascetics and laymen, followed the advice, contributing to the derisive amusement of some Englishmen and many Mahomedans who, out of curiosity, were following the pilgrims on horseback.

The procession moved on and halted by the side of a tarn, the dwelling-place of a brood of snakes, one of the reptiles being, as the pāndās revealed to the believers, the god Siva in disguise. Salutations to Siva and gifts to the pāndās were quickly made, lest the god-snake should disappear under water before the worship ended.

Six miles below Amarnāth is the village of Bhairogaddi. Pilgrims leave their belongings here. By night they ascend the hill of Amarnāth to obtain the blessed sight of the god Amarlinga ere the sun be high in heaven.

The heat of the day would melt the frozen covering of the stalagmite which is worshipped as the god. During the night march several persons disappeared in the snow that filled the ravine by the side of the pilgrim path, perishing

before the arrival of help. At the end of the day's march a detached monolith, rising to a height of about ten feet, was, under priestly direction, worshipped as the god Bhairav, and the customary gifts made to the pāndās. Suddenly one of them shouted: 'Look! look! a pair of pigeons is flying away from the cave of Amarnāth. They will be invisible to the sinful, and visible only to the righteous'.

Loud rose the chorus, 'I have seen them! I have seen them!' and, in the general desire to avert the imputation of sin, a discussion was raised on the form and colour of the birds. The pāndās were not slow to turn the occasion to their own advantage.

The cave of Amarnāth lies behind a precipice in which there is a narrow natural tunnel affording space for a man to pass either way. The pāndās call this orifice the *Garbha-Yoni* (Originating Womb). It is believed that a passage through the orifice, if money be given, frees the soul from the wheel of transmigration. On each side of the tunnel a Mahomedan guard exacts a fee of one pice. Unable to meet this demand Sivanarayan had to take a roundabout path. He studied God's purpose and felt for the sufferings of His creatures. The wheel of rebirth troubled him not.

The pilgrims approached the cave of Amarnāth. Snow melting in a higher region formed

a stream which the pāndās called the Amargangā (the Ganges of the Immortals). Directed by priestly guides, pilgrims of both sexes plunge into this stream *in puris naturalibus*. Thus cleansed of all sins they besmear themselves with holy ashes, purchased from the Mahomedans who dwell in pits all around. After further alms they become fitted for a vision of the god. Natural modesty induced some of the women to wear a scanty skirt of leaves, to the scandal of their holier companions. These proceedings caused the visitors of alien faiths to clap their hands in contemptuous mirth.

The alms collected in this place is divided into four parts; one goes to the pāndās, one is used for the maintenance of the roads, and the rest is taken by the Mahomedan Troglodytes. In the cave two pieces of stalagmite covered by a coating of ice, polished by the pāndās betimes, are revealed to the pilgrims as Siva and his consort Pārvati. The devotees prostrate themselves before these, and go through the pantomime of transferring the dust from the divine feet to their own heads, for actual dust there is none here. Emerging from the cave gratuities are bestowed on the pāndās.

Sivanarayan did not bathe in the Amargangā or besmear himself with ashes, or make prostrations to the gods. He watched the scene from a distance, and was hated as an impenitent sinner.

The night was passed at Bhairogaddi to pick up the pilgrims' effects.

'Eternal hell,' said Sivanarayan to the pilgrim crowd, 'is the portion of any one who tells a lie in a holy place, and adherence to truth secures the unending joy of salvation. I did not see the pigeons of Amarnāth.'

First one, then another, and then all together said: 'I too did not see them'.

At Mattan the pilgrims rested another night. Near the rest-house a man was carrying a pot of milk for sale. A sādhu of the Rāmānuja sect settled the price at one rupee and four annas, and desired the milk to be taken to his lodgings. A great-souled sannyāsi of Sankara's sect asked the milkman the price of it.

'Two rupees, eight annas,' said the milkman.

'Take it to my lodgings, I will pay that price.'

'You can't have the milk,' struck in the sādhu, 'I have bought it.'

'Hold your tongue, or I shall pound you up and drink you off like *bhāng*.¹'

'Have you ever done that service to any man?'

Pulled contrary ways by these holy, but angry men, the earthen pot was broken in pieces, and the contents spilt on the ground. The sannyāsi hit the Vaishnav monk with his stick, and a general engagement ensued between the members

¹ A preparation of the leaves of the Indian hemp-tree.

of the rival sects, resulting in broken limbs to both parties. The disturbance attracted a large number of Mahomedans of the town. They separated the combatants with impartial distribution of blows.

'You fellows,' said the preservers of peace, 'you have shaved your heads and become saints indeed! You can't live in peace, but must needs fight. Householders are better. They work to maintain their families, are hospitable to strangers, and have faith in God.'

'The merit,' said Sivanarayan, addressing the pilgrims, 'the merit of the pilgrimage to Amarnāth has soon borne fruit. The wounded saints are enjoying Kailās and Vaikuntha in the midst of their torments. Neither monks nor householders know the true Amarnāth. It is one of the names of God, manifested as Light. He neither waxes nor wanes. He is all-knowing, all-comprehending, complete. Seeing Him the mortal becomes immortal, dwelling in everlasting joy. Prakriti (power) and Purusha (sentience), symbolized as sun and moon, are the two pigeons proceeding from Him, and are present before our eyes. The righteous alone know Him truly, the sinful turn their faces away from Him. Desire and delusion are the *Garbha-Yoni* which the devotee crosses, and bathing in the Ganges of Wisdom puts peace into the naked soul and unites it with God. His eyes see naught beside

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God and his true self. You are wandering from place to place, blind to the essential truth. Seek refuge in the All-Comprehending Supreme Being, complete and expressed as Light, in and out. He will take away your burdens.'

CHAPTER IV

Barāmula—The *modi* shop—Peshawar—Hindu and Moslem—In praise of British rule—No money, no caste—Amritsar—God in the Golden Temple—The Sukhatalao—The holy thief—The palace at Jodhpur—Mount Abu—Girnar—Rāmānanda's umbrella—Ambika Bhowāni's Temple—The Nāgās—True saints—Cannibalism as a rite—The Serowghi Temple—A test of credulity.

FROM Srinagar on his way to the Punjab, Sivanarayan arrived at Barāmula. About two miles beyond the military outpost two Brahmins were lying down on a *charpoy* (stringed bedstead) at a *modi* shop.¹ Two Mahomedans rode up to the place and told them to get up. As soon as they declared themselves Brahmins, whip-lashes rained down, making them cry for mercy with shrieks of pain. The Moslems felt no mercy, but with added fury shouted: 'You low-born unbelievers, you don't stand up in our presence, but are lying down'. The shopkeeper humbly craved forgiveness, and shared the fate of his guests.

'Why is this violence?' Sivanarayan said, soothing the angry Moslems. 'Consider soberly what thing it is that you call Mahomedan. The substances that are in you are also in the Hindu.

¹A petty grocery.

If Mahomedan is a name for circumcision, then you too are by birth Hindus—your origin is Hindu. Why, then, do you lose self-control on hearing that name? See what pain you have caused to these innocent men. If they were stronger they would have retaliated. You would not have liked that. All are expressions of Allah. It is wrong to use violence. Walk the path of life with sobriety and discrimination.'

'Your words are true,' they said, 'but we must follow the teachers of our faith. We have heard that Moslem is a name for truth, and yet many liars call themselves Moslems.'

Crossing the Indus, Sivanarayan sat down by the side of a well in front of the fort at Peshawar. It was near dusk. A Brahamachāri, who lived close by, near a sacred fire-place, told him to seek shelter for the night within the town, which was guarded during the day by British sentries, while at night its gates were shut. The Mahomedans of the place would kill any one found outside the city gates at night. Or if such a one were a Hindu he might be forcibly circumcised and married to a Moslem damsel, to the utter ruin of caste.

'I need fear none,' said Sivanarayan; 'my caste is the lowest on earth, all castes enter into me, as all rivers flow into the sea.'

After travelling for some days towards Kabul he returned and witnessed a shocking incident

in a Punjab village. There were only two or three Hindu families in that village, the rest being all Mahomedans. A Hindu maiden, shrieking and struggling, was being carried away by some Mahomedans, not of the village. Her cries brought her relatives upon the scene, supplicants for her release, but they were driven back with blows.

A Hindu shopkeeper informed Sivanarayan that on the western frontier of the Punjab the position of the Hindus was most deplorable. Attractive Hindu girls were constantly abducted and married to Mahomedans by force. No redress could be obtained from the authorities, because these were of the same faith. They said that the Hindu being the Mahomedan's inferior, such marriages were for the captive girls' own good. Married Hindu women, if found unprotected, would be held to ransom and robbed of their personal ornaments. Villages, with considerable Hindu populations, would be looted every two or three years, and the women led away captive. The shopkeeper grew eloquent in praise of the British rule in Hindustan,¹ and blessed the rulers.

'Why don't you,' asked Sivanarayan, 'end your troubles by migrating to Hindustan?'

'So few of us are now left,' cried the man, in tears; 'where shall we go? Formerly we were

¹ i.e. Northern India between the Punjab and Bengal.

all Hindus in these parts. A Moslem chief made many converts by forcing beef into Hindu mouths. In those days we were called Aryas and not Hindus. Finding out that the name meant "noble", he, by a proclamation, insisted, upon pain of death, on the disuse of that name and the adoption of the epithet Hindu. The proclamation required us to beat our breasts in mourning for the dead and to repeat the name of Allah, abandoning those of our own gods. Even in Hindustan there is no Hindu king; the manhood of the Hindus has been reduced to the vainglorious words that issue from their lips.'

Sivanarayan heard in another Punjab village that two Brahmin youths on a journey to Peshawar had been attacked by some Mahomedans, and robbed of the sacred thread and forced to taste beef. Returning home they acquainted their parents with their misfortune. The advice of pundits was sought. The holy and learned conclave undertook to purify them on receipt of a fee of Rs. 200 for each. The amount was beyond the means of the penitents. Driven from their homes by this false piety, in tears they joined the ranks of the Mahomedans. Sivanarayan cried shame on the interpreters of the law who depended for purification on money, and compared their conduct to that of the low-caste Hindus who are purged of all offences by

a generous distribution of fermented palm-juice among their caste fellows.¹

In the Golden Temple, rising from the breast of an artificial lake, the Sikhs worshipped a book—paper, ink, and cloth—with lowly bows and offerings of money. Round about dwelt Mohunts in their monasteries and entertained wandering sādhus. At meal-time Sivanarayan accompanied some sādhus, who were dressed in the garb of their profession, to a monastery. Those whose holiness was attested by their garments were hospitably welcomed; but Sivanarayan was unceremoniously thrown out.

He spent some days by the side of the tank named Sukhatalao, about two miles from Amritsar. Two sādhus of the place evinced much pleasure in holding constant conversations with him concerning God. This attracted to him the people of the neighbouring villages, who ministered to his wants. In course of time the Mohunts, ashamed of their previous conduct, came and prostrated themselves before him.

Rajaram Khettry, of Amritsar, was especially devoted to him. On his first visit he left for the unknown stranger a blanket, a wrapper, and a drinking vessel. Shortly afterwards, finding the opportunity in Sivanarayan's absence, a sādhu, who had come to see him, stole those articles and

¹ This was before British rule was firmly established. Some years separate the incidents related and those that follow.

pledged them with a pawnbroker for Rs. 5. He spent the money in entertaining himself with opium, *ganja*, and varieties of sweetmeats. Subsequently Rajaram missed his presents and questioned Sivanarayan, who merely replied: 'He who had given has taken away'. Suspecting they were stolen he replaced them, despite remonstrance.

In the meantime the thief returned to the pawnbroker asking for a further advance, which the latter refused, and, producing the articles, demanded their immediate redemption. Informed of this by a servant who had witnessed the incident, Rajaram caught the *sādhū* thief red-handed. Against the advice of the bystanders to hand over the culprit to the police after unofficial chastisement, he brought the thief to Sivanarayan, who, he said, was his policeman.

'You gave me these things,' said Sivanarayan, after the story was told, 'for my comfort. But this other man applied them to his own use. There is nothing else to do but to forgive and release him. True, you cannot protect the good without punishing the evil-doer. But as you have brought him to me let him go.'

Rajaram was wise and loved righteousness. He released the thief and redeemed the stolen property. Sivanarayan requested him to take the articles away and keep them for the use of

the next stranger who would need them, as his own wanderings must be immediately resumed. Rajaram offered to get him a railway ticket to his immediate destination, and begged him to come again. Sivanarayan wanted to travel on foot in order the better to observe the condition of the people, and therefore a ticket to him was useless. Rajaram all the same purchased for him a railway ticket to Rorhi Sakkar in Sindh, and begged him to take a few gold mohurs as a provision for the journey.

'Nobody,' said Rajaram, 'takes any notice of you, as you are without any of the distinctive marks of a sādhu. Money will come useful in your wanderings.'

'What use,' replied Sivanarayan, 'has a sādhu for money? He has no children to marry. Money is a necessity to a householder. It is wrong to give money to a sādhu, and wrong for him to take it. The Supreme Being, whose expression is Light and who rules all hearts, is the wealth of a sādhu. What need has he of this false wealth? All he needs is a handful of food to sustain life, and a piece of cloth to hide his nakedness. Food and raiment are stored for him in every house. Whatever needs he feels will be supplied by God in the form of some man's generosity. If one's thoughts are established on Him, money will come when money is wanted. Keep the gold mohurs and use it for the good

of your own family and the stranger who comes hungry to your door.'

From Sindh, wandering through Nabha and Patiala, Sivanarayan reached Delhi, and then through Bharatpur, Karauli, and Jeypore, till he found himself before the palace at Jodhpur. It was a festive day. The house of a vassal remiss in the discharge of state dues had been razed to the ground, driving him with his family into the jungles for shelter.

Sivanarayan in rags stood before the Raja, who in anger ordered him away. The dutiful servants took him by his arms and neck and drove him on to the high road. He found all Rajas alike strangers to true humanity. A dromedarist of the Raja happened upon him at a wild and lonely part of the road, and he therefore decided to ride to Pali and spend a night there.

At Abu, Sivanarayan heard that many sages were supposed to dwell there. He searched on all sides—above, below, and inside the caves—and found indeed many who were reputed wise and holy. They accepted service from the laity, and promising to work miracles in their favour, distributed certain wild roots and ashes, said to confer wealth, progeny, and other objects of desire on the fortunate recipient. Higher up, near a pool of water, the Englishman was enjoying the Kailās, built by his own hands.

Leaving behind the Gaekwar's territory, Siva-

narayan turned his steps towards Mount Girnar. The ascent began near a cremation cemetery. Hard by was a Brahamachāri with his idols. Sivanarayan, when he sat down, did not salute him.

‘Who are you, rascal,’ exclaimed the angry Brahamachāri, ‘that you don’t bow down to my gods?’

‘I see no god,’ replied Sivanarayan; ‘these are only figures of stone and metal. If these are to be bowed down to, the same homage must be paid to these hills, and to all domestic utensils.’

‘Are you a sādhu or a householder?’

‘I don’t know what is a sādhu, nor what is a householder.’

‘Have you studied the Shāstras?’

‘I have, and have not,’ replied Sivanarayan. ‘It is taught in your Shāstras that the sun is the eye and the moon the mind of the All-Comprehending God in His visible aspect. Meditate on His expression — the Light — and worship Him. He will remove all your errors and sufferings.’

‘True,’ said the Brahamachāri after saluting Sivanarayan with respect, ‘it is so written in the Shāstras, but the teaching is not generally understood or believed in.’

The road winds upwards by the side of natural caves where sādhus live upon gifts of food and money received from pilgrim hands. Higher up

is the Chhattra¹ or hostelry of Rāmānanda, the founder of a Vaishnava sect called after him Rāmānandi. The Mohunt at the head of this institution is held in great esteem. Sivanarayan sat down near him without making the bow of obeisance which he claimed and received from all.

'Who are you?' inquired the monk in annoyance; 'to what sect of sādhus do you belong?'

'I am a man,' said Sivanarayan, 'the same as you are. I don't know what thing a sect is.'

'I can see you are a man, you rascal. But what is your caste?'

'If you are entirely dependent on information from me I might say anything to satisfy you.'

'Be off, you rascal,' was the reply with which the interview ended.

Sivanarayan had heard that many holy Rishis of the Aghori sect were to be found on Mount Girnar. He searched for them unsuccessfully on all sides, and came upon a Brahamachāri and a Brahmin follower of Rāmānuja Swāmi, and their treatment of him was an echo of the Mohunt's. Higher up stands the temple of Ambikā Bhowāni. A householder dressed like a monk was seated there. In front of the goddess was a lighted lamp; the sacred fire-

¹ Literally, an umbrella. In the days of ascetic poverty a large one made of leaves was placed over a long pole stuck in the ground for travellers to rest under. This is the origin of the present houses.

place close by was full of ashes. A piece of stone daubed with vermillion rested near, and by lamplight was worshipped with offerings of money.

At no great distance was the stretch of water called the water-pot (*kamandulu*) of Dattatreya.¹ Round about it lay the settlement of the naked ascetics, called *Nāgās*. Sivanarayan saw four sādhus arrive there. Having made some mistake in describing themselves, they were deprived of all their belongings and turned out of the place, according to the custom of the *Nāgās*, whose hospitality can be claimed by a sādhu visitor for a day and night only upon giving a correct description of himself. Any mistake therein causes instant expulsion and forfeiture of goods. Constant complaints of *Nāgā* outrages were made, to the Nawab of Junāgar, whose rule extends over the Girnar Hills. For a time the Nawab refused to entertain them. Once he had the *Nāgās* arrested and brought before him. They confessed their misconduct, which they justified as fulfilling the injunction of the founder of their sect. The plea was rejected, and they were ordered to make restitution and leave Girnar. The latter part of the order was disobeyed. The *Nāgās* kept to their usual haunts, of which the Nawab took no notice.

¹ A noted sage said to have attained wonderful powers by the fervour of his austerities.

Sivanarayan visited the Chhattra of Gorakshanath¹ and the place of Kabir Dāss² as he wandered over the hills. He found a few true saints amongst the Vaishnavas of the Rāmānuja sect and one among the Aghoris—men whose whole being was surrendered to God and established on Him.

To frighten away people the ascetics have spread a report that the Aghori saints kill and devour whomsoever they find there at night. But those that Sivanarayan met on this occasion were holy men of wisdom. Member of this sect if driven to extremity would not hesitate to eat a corpse for support of life. Some would do that even as a matter of religious training. But they would never kill a man for a cannibal feast.

Meeting some pilgrims in quest of holy saints, Sivanarayan told them that the same God dwelt in all things and all creatures. All men in ultimate reality were holy saints. 'Whoso perceiveth not the ultimate reality is blind. Whoso perceiveth it, to whom the individual soul and the supreme Soul are one, and the unity of being manifest, is truly a saint. The sects are many, but the saints are few.'

A little way beyond is the Temple of the Serowghis,³ an enormous pile, looking like a

¹ The founder of a sect of ascetics, by whom he is deified.

² A Vaishnava religious teacher, by caste a weaver.

³ A sect allied to the Jains.

fort. From this spot steps are cut into the side of the rock to meet the road to Junāgar. Sivanarayan passed a few days by the side of these steps in a natural cave hidden by a dense jungle growth. In answer to inquiries he used to describe himself simply as a man. People shunned him in contempt, not finding on him the external marks of a professional ascetic. Sivanarayan kept himself alive by eating the leaves of a neighbouring tree. None ministered to his wants.

To test the credulity of householders and ascetics Sivanarayan cleared a rectangular space in the jungle, and daubed it well with mud. He placed a clean stone on each of its four corners, and one in the middle. The stones were painted with wet brick-dust and named after different Hindu gods, and the spot was called 'the five holy places'. Sivanarayan scattered wild flowers on the stones, and sat watching the scene in silence. Pilgrims flocked round with offerings of food and coins. Some prostrated themselves, some asked for the names of the idols, and some remarked it was a holy shrine, miraculously come into existence. By nightfall one and a half maunds of grains and eight annas in money had been collected there, which Sivanarayan made over to the keeper of a small grocery shop on the heights.

Shortly it came to the knowledge of the gentry

at Junāgar that a great sādhu in rags was observing a protracted fast on the hills. They sent him, by coolies, a large store of food. Sivanarayan wanted the coolies to carry back their loads, as he was going away directly. But they would not. At his request an ascetic took over the entire quantity and he departed for Dwarkā, passing Junāgar and Porbunder on the way.

CHAPTER V

Dwarkā—Whom do you worship?—Branded for Heaven—
Narāyana's Pool—Division of spoils—Hinglāz—Multan—
Mosque against temple—Persecution of Hindus—Pax
Britannica—A Vaishnava monk—The gods, a burden—
Release from the gods.

THE famous temple at Dwarkā¹ enshrines a stone image of Krishna. The silver-sandalled feet of the chief pāndā betokened his rank.

'Show me Krishna,' said Sivanarayan to him. Then, a fee or offering of Rs 2½ being demanded, he said: 'If Krishna is a name for the All-Comprehending Supreme Being, expressed as Light, within and out, what can we have to give Him? In his spiritual blindness man takes a stone image for his Maker, and in pride of existence offers to his god what he fancies his own—he, who cannot make the tiniest blade of grass. You and your brother priests are constant in worshipping the image with prayers and recitals of holy texts, and yet your greed and blindness increase from day to day. What is the reason?'

'Have you,' cried the priest in anger, 'come to see the god or to give me wisdom? Who

¹ Dwarkā was the home of Krishna and his family.

are you to instruct me? Make your offering, and see the god, or take yourself away.'

'I have no money. Shall I never find God?'

'Never without money,' said the pāndā-priest, whose thoughts had turned into the stone he worshipped.

'The god Krishna inside this temple is made of wood, metal, or earth. The material being available everywhere, to come to your temple is wholly unnecessary. Of what is your god made? Is He manifest (*sākāra*) or hidden (*nirākāra*)? If the former, the manifested Deity is present before all as the earth, water, fire, air, *ākāsa*, and symbolized as sun and moon. Tell me, of them which is God. If you call the transcendent Deity Krishna, then where is He, how is He to be found?—show Him to me.'

At these words of Sivanarayan the pāndās took counsel together and turned him out, lest he should corrupt the faith of the pilgrims. He went to the place close by where pilgrims for a fee were branded on the arm as a memento of their pilgrimage. The fees collected were divided between the ruling State and the pāndās. Considering Sivanarayan's poverty they offered to brand him for the merest trifle, and promised him freedom from all spiritual penalty even if the funeral torch were not applied to his dead face in due form.

'What sin,' asked Sivanarayan, 'has the body

committed that it should be punished with branding? Besides, what effect will it have on the soul? If branding led to salvation all branded cattle are already saved. Why do you drag others into the maze of error you are lost in yourselves? Whoso hath loving faith in the true lord Krishna, that is to say, in the all-comprehending Supreme Being, manifested as Light, needeth no branding for his salvation. Such a one is inwardly branded with the wisdom of God. Those who have turned from Him desire this outward branding.'

Crossing over to Cutch, Sivanarayan reached the holy pool of Narāyan,¹ a distance of about eighty miles from the capital. Here the pilgrims are branded on the breast after a purification plunge in the sacred waters. The ceremony involves the payment of a fee to the pāndās.

On that day a pāndā had received from a certain pilgrim one pice more than his proper share. The others desired the pice to be turned into cowrie-shells and divided amongst those entitled to a share. This was resisted as inconvenient, and another mode of equalizing shares was proposed and rejected. The dispute grew warm, and the illegitimate holder of the pice was left senseless with blows, and robbed of all the money on him.

'Ye dwellers round this pool,' said Sivanara-

¹ A name of Vishnu.

yan, moved by the spectacle, 'what have you gained by all your worship and ablutions? You are prepared for a pice to take the life of a fellow-creature. God, whose expression is Light, within and out, is the true holy tank. Plunge into Him and secure eternal salvation. Branding is unnecessary. On His broad breast are branded the sky, and the sun and moon for ever. Let all men and women of high and low degrees receive on their hearts the brand of God, when all troubles will end.'

Sivanarayan steamed over to Karachi and thence proceeded to Tatta in Sindh. In this town pilgrims obtain provisions and a guide for their long camel ride to the holy shrine of Hinglāz on the Mekran coast. The journey both ways takes from twelve to fourteen days. The road passes through inhospitable jungles and tracts of sandy desert. From the few Moslem villages scattered on the route the pilgrim's Hindu faith forbids the reception of food or drink, to the great suffering of the improvident devotee.

An ancient Moslem dame sits near a fire-place, built into a hollow in the earth. She keeps a lamp burning day and night against the arrival of pilgrims. After purification ablutions, in the manner prevalent at Amarnāth, the devotee receives ashes from the fire-place to rub over his body. Then follows the ceremonial vision of the lighted lamp accompanied by money

offerings. A little later commences the return march. The offerings collected at the shrine belong to the Mohunt of Tatta, portions being allowed, however, to the guides and the Moslem custodian of the shrine.

Sivanarayan's journey was solitary, apart from the pilgrim throng. He left the shrine and reached Rorhi Sakkar, passing through Hyderabad (Sindh). On a little island in the river Sātbhela, which flows past Sakkar, there is a small colony of sādhus, who drove him away because he did not bear the distinctive marks of their sect.

Arriving at Multan, Sivanarayan noticed a large mosque within the fort. Outside there is a Hindu temple enshrining images of Krishna, Pralhād,¹ and Sudām.² This temple was originally modest in size. But the Hindus commenced to rebuild it on a larger scale. The Mahomedans objected, on the ground that the enlarged dimensions of the temple would reduce the comparative magnitude of their inosque.

'Your race,' protested a Moslem deputation to the Hindu leaders, 'is inferior to ours. Your place of worship must accordingly be inferior in size.'

¹ A Daitya or Titan prince, much persecuted for his devotion to Vishnu, of whom Krishna is reckoned an incarnation.

² One of the companions of Krishna's youth, spent among cowherds.

'So long,' replied the Hindus, 'as sovereignty was yours you ruled the land and built immense mosques. Now that God has given us the money we too shall raise imposing places of worship.'

The temple progressed towards completion. One day a riotous Moslem mob slaughtered kine on the spot, and threw down the meat near the images in the temple, beating back the Hindus and plundering the place. The Mohunt of the place was a lady, who saved her life and honour by hiding in a dark room. As the news spread, a large gathering of Hindus gave battle to a larger crowd of Mahomedans, and had the worst of the fight. The military had to be called out to quell the disturbance, and legal proceedings commenced in a British court.

This incensed the then Nawab of Bhawalpore. Within his territories commenced a regular persecution of Hindus. Beef defiled Hindu homes and shops. The Hindu officials of the State left in consternation. Matters came to such a pass that the British Government had to interfere and threaten the Nawab with deportation and imprisonment—so the rumour went.

On the way from Multan a monk of the Rāmānuja sect joined Sivanarayan in his wanderings. The monk carried on his shoulders a heavy bundle, containing, besides things for his personal use, idols of stone and metal of considerable weight.

‘Consider,’ said Sivanarayan in compassion, ‘O Mahātmā, whether you have entered a monastic order for the removal of your burdens or for adding to them. If the former, then why suffer under such a grievous burden? Would it not be better to keep just what you need?’

‘My lord,’ said the monk, ‘I have here my wearing apparel and articles of daily use. Besides, my *guru* gave me many gods, and I have collected many of them at the places I have visited. I must take them all to my *guru*’s abode.’

‘It is,’ continued Sivanarayan, ‘no doubt praiseworthy of you to carry to your *guru* the best of what you collect in the course of your pilgrimage. But consider what it is that you call “I” and what it is you call God. Who are you, the worshipper? And what is God, the worshipped? In the wide expanse of space, either within or outside you, what is there superior to yourself to be worshipped? It is right to worship that alone which is superior to yourself, so that by the wisdom, coming from the grace of that superior you might attain to the supreme joy called Salvation or *Mukti*. But what you are carrying on your shoulders is but metal and stone that God has created useful for your life on earth. Are these superior to you, or you to them? You have intelligence which discriminates between truth and falsehood. Hold

fast to truth and wisdom, and salvation will be yours.'

'My lord,' said the ascetic, 'I worship God in this metal and stone, believing in His presence therein.'

'O noble ascetic,' said Sivanarayan, 'if you can believe in God's presence in metal and stone and worship Him in inanimate objects, how is it you cannot believe in Him and worship Him in the living soul in your own breast? Why should He be absent from the soul in you while present in unconscious objects? Find Him in love within yourself.'

'As I am an expression of God, so also is the Inanimate. What harm can there be, then, in worshipping Him in His inanimate expressions?'

'No doubt all that you see is His expression, and so are you. But ponder well. The water of the holy Ganges is the same substance as the water of the ditch. But ought I to ask you to drink ditch-water for that reason? Ditch-water will breed disease, while the water of the Ganges will remove your thirst and make you feel refreshed. Mud, ordure, and cooked rice are the same in substance. But should I for that reason tell you to eat either of the two first, in preference to the last? The ignorant man, the thief, and the robber do not differ in the order of reality or substance from the great-souled, learned ascetic. But is the condition of the former class as desirable

as of the latter? Consider further. According to the teachings of your scriptures the manifested or expressed God is ever present before you. The Vedas say that the sun is His eye, the moon His mind, the akāsā His head and breast, the air His life, the water His blood, and the earth His feet. Reflect. When God in His aspect of expression or manifestation is ever present before you, to whom are you to give worship, setting Him aside? All the holy writings, while teaching meditation, have pointed out that the Supreme Being, expressed as Light, in and out, is the proper object of meditation and mental rest. It behoves you, therefore, to turn to Him in love and reverence. By the fervour of that meditation, when you see yourself to be the same light as the object meditated on, then will you find everlasting, joyous rest in the All-Comprehending Supreme Being. This All-Powerful Being, manifested as Light, is the world's Parent, Teacher, and Soul. Having abandoned Him and fastened your mind upon unreal, transitory appearances, you are wandering over the face of the earth, with a mind enfeebled by what it dwells on. Whatever be the name you bestow upon the recipient of your worship, that worship must be directed to Him. The true substance of you and your God is one. Established in this thought, meditate on Him. Feel towards Him as child to parent, the same and yet different,

the object of love, veneration, and worship, though inwardly the same.'

'Your words are true,' said the ascetic; 'another paramhansa told me the same thing, but I could not accept his teaching. From your words the conviction comes to me that besides the Supreme Being, manifested as Light, there is none else in existence. Having turned away from Him I am wandering, lost in error. If you would compassionately bestow your companionship on me, the darkness will be lifted from my soul. In vain have I so long borne the burden of these gods of stone and metal.'

'Believe,' said Sivanarayan, 'as God moves you from within.'

'My lord,' said the ascetic, 'after much thought the conviction arises in me that I had better throw these gods into the water, with the exception of a small selection.'

'Do as you feel prompted,' was Sivanarayan's reply.

The ascetic kept back a few stone images that pleased his eye, and prostrated himself before the one God.

'When the Supreme Being, manifested as Light, is ever present everywhere,' said the ascetic after a few days, 'then why should I suffer under the weight of these images? I will hang them on the branch of this tree for any one to take away who wishes.'

In a little while the ascetic gave away all he had, except what was absolutely necessary for the journey.

'I bow down to you a thousand times,' said he, addressing Sivanarayan; 'you have saved me from the net that enmeshed me. Now give me your blessings that my thought may for ever lovingly rest on the Supreme Being.'

'There is no good fortune beyond that,' said Sivanarayan.

CHAPTER VI

Mussourie—The Sikh monastery—‘My Lord the Book’—Etiquette of the monastery—Another Sikh monastery—The mysterious acceptance of offering—The invisible hand—Jwālāmukhi—Living fire—Local legends—Pushkar—Sāvitri and Gāyatri—Ajmere—Khwājā Sahib’s tomb—Alla’s grasp—Walkeswar—The cremation ground—The Pundit Jālirām—The Thākurbāti.

It was raining at Mussourie. Sivanarayan found but poor shelter under a tree. A Sikh, seeing his plight, advised him to ask hospitality at some human habitation.

‘I am an animal of the jungles,’ said Sivanarayan; ‘townsfolk will not take to me kindly. I have no place with them.’

The Sikh promised him the ready hospitality of a monastery of his faith, near the Bazaar. Sivanarayan accompanied him and sat down in the place pointed out. After a while he lay down to rest his tired limbs. A sādhu remonstrated with him in strong language, as his feet pointed towards a saint’s tomb. Sivanarayan changed his posture.

‘Take away your feet,’ said the sādhu; ‘don’t you see, fellow, your feet are in the direction of the Granth Sahib?’¹ Sivanarayan moved again.

¹ Literally, ‘My Lord the Book’, the Sikh Scriptures.

‘What a fool you are!’ came again the voice of remonstrance; ‘don’t you see, your feet are directly in the line of the Mohunt’s state chair?’ Sivanarayan turned round.

‘Are you blind?’ said the sādhu, angry and threatening; ‘don’t you see the Granth Sahib’s bed, on which he is laid to rest when the second quarter of the night has passed? Go away, you rascal.’

‘Tell me, brother,’ said Sivanarayan, ‘how am I to dispose of my feet? Am I to remain standing or to raise my feet towards the sky? In what direction do you lie down at night?’

‘Don’t argue with me, you fellow,’ said the sādhu; ‘after the Granth Sahib is laid to rest on his bed we lie down with our feet in the direction in which the Granth Sahib is now seated.’

‘Very well,’ said Sivanarayan, ‘after you lie down I shall follow your example. You worship the invisible God, and yet you are as unintelligent as the beasts of the field. You never think in what things or places He is present, and where absent. He is in the feet as also in the paper, ink, and cloth you call the Granth Sahib. He is in all places, high and low, and is all things. You will not allow a human frame, informed by the living soul, to lie at ease, but you must venerate a book made of paper, ink, and cloth, and a lump of clay, which once was the body of a man, while you contemn the intelligence which

rules all things. It is for this that the whole nation—prince and peasant, monk and layman—is destitute of strength and dependent in all things, thus suffering untold miseries. Oh! you do not understand the madness of spiritual pride in your hearts. From where shall come help? No one here is master of himself. In spiritual darkness you can neither see nor understand. You know not God, the true *guru*, the true soul.

'A Moslem sect in Sindh bastinadoes the feet stretched out to the west, the direction of Mahomed's tomb. The Hindu bows his head before his idol. Many Christians uncover and bend the knee in buildings, called churches. Each sect praises its own practice and condemns that of the others. And all sects are in perpetual bondage to hate and contention, struggling to establish the superiority of each. Let all men consider: If the human body turned to clay and mortar and brick are to be worshipped as divine, then, as those substances are to be found everywhere, what is the use of worshipping them in any particular condition? You take a building, call it church, mosque, or temple, according to your faith, deem it holy and the rest unholy. And yet, all buildings are but earth. The Supreme Being, including in Himself the earth, is all-comprehending, complete, and manifested as Light. But you neither know nor acknowledge Him. Is He not the ruler of all hearts,

comprehending in Himself matter, force, the intelligent, the unintelligent and the cause, complete within and without, and self-existent? Does He dwell only in buildings for which men imagine the names temple, mosque, and so forth? Is He non-existent elsewhere? Giving up all regard for particular forms and conditions, seek refuge in Him. He will remove all your errors and maintain you in supreme joy.'

Sivanarayan visited the establishment of another group of ascetics of the same order. There, before the Granth Sahib is a water-pot, half sunk in the earth. By a small hole at the bottom, the pot communicates with a narrow channel. A smaller vessel of copper, placed on its top, has on its own lower end a cunning contrivance, which, by a suitable movement of the vessel, will shut and open, without attracting notice.

Devotees make offerings of sherbet and *halwa*¹ to the Granth Sahib. The sherbet is poured into the copper vessel, and, in the case of common devotees, disappears through the one below into the underground channel. If the devotee be rich, measures are taken to prevent the sherbet running out, and the offerer is condemned as an impenitent sinner, who must, by money gifts to the Granth Sahib, propitiate Bābā Nānak² and obtain acceptance of his offering. Influenced by

¹ A sweetened paste of flour.

² The founder of the Sikh sect.

the gift, the sherbet is consumed, and the empty copper vessel flourished before the faithful assembly. The acceptance of the *halwa* by Bābā Nānak is signified by the appearance on it of the impression of a hand, devoutly believed to belong to the invisible saint. The time taken for the impression to appear varies according to the offerer's means. When the money gift reaches its maximum, Bābā Nānak's hand, constructed of copper, is secretly laid on the sweetened paste, to the great edification of the congregation.

The fraud was finally discovered by an intelligent Sikh of the name of Ram Sing, and the place closed. Referring to the author of this fraud a pious Sikh ascetic of the place said to Sivanarayan: 'He had much religion, but no mercy'.

Sivanarayan reached Jwālāmukhi by the hill route. From the holy hearth inside the temple rose tongues of consecrated fire, which received offerings from all around. On the walls burned, as if from gas-burners, flames of many degrees of brilliancy. Feeble flames could also be seen at short distances from the inner and outer walls of the temple. Devotees stuck soft sweetmeats on the walls close to the flames, which were slowly consumed. This phenomenon is described by ignorant piety as the living fire leaping on to the pilgrims' hands to receive offerings. None

seemed to reflect that not only on this spot, but all the world over, fire receives and turns into its own nature all that is offered to it. It is the same fire that shines in the sky as the sun. When he puts forth his strength the world burns in pain, and when the vapours he sucks up from the ocean are poured forth as rain, the world rejoices in the coolness.

‘It is a long story, sir,’ said the gentle pāndā, ‘and the events are many and ancient. The Emperor Aurangzeb and Moslem fanatics, like Mahomed Fakir, destroyed our holy images at many a celebrated shrine. They burned our scriptures, tore our sacred threads to pieces, and made Moslems of Brahmins. The Viswanāth image of Benares was broken into four parts; one was thrown into a neighbouring well, and the rest went to form steps of a mosque for Moslem worshippers’ shoes to rest on. They said the Hindu had no powerful or real God, but merely helpless images, made by the hands of man. Someone said to them that the only Hindu god, visible and powerful, was the burning flame at Jwalamukhi. They decided to investigate and ascertain the truth. Here they found a real flame of fire, rising heavenwards from the earth. Suspecting fraud, they dug up the earth at the foot of the flame without being able to put it out. The test was varied. A plate of iron was placed over the flame, and still it burned. Through

a layer of seven iron plates the flame penetrated and appeared on the top. They acknowledged the god and built a large temple in the place of the small one then in existence, gilding it with gold down to where the hands of man could reach.'

'Why need a man,' said Sivanarayan, 'come to Jwālāmukhi to see fire, which is everywhere to be seen? The fire within you digests the food which it cooks in your kitchen. The great fire, called Sun, burns without fuel, night and day. If you see that fire, and feel within you Him who is that fire, your joy will know no end.'

Finding holy places all of a type, Sivanarayan turned away from the difficult road to Badrināth, and arrived at Pushkar in Rajputana. On the west of the holy tank, in which the pilgrims observe the ritual of ablution, rise two hillocks, surmounted respectively by the temples of Sāvitri and Gāyatri. The pilgrims rely on these goddesses for the removal of their sins and sorrows. Sivanarayan explained to them that according to the true import of the Scriptures the manifested aspect of God is the light called the Sun, of which Sāvitri is but an imagined name. Another form of the Sun, called the Moon, is the light indicated by the name Gāyatri. God, manifested as the Light, will take away the world's burden of sin and suffering. Man wanders in error, not knowing Him, the true God.

At Ajmere Sivanarayan saw, adjoining a mosque, the tomb of a Mahomedan saint, Khwājā Sahib. The tomb was decked out in all the bravery of lanterns and chandeliers. Hindus and Moslems flocked to the tomb, attracted by its miracle-working reputation. Touts were employed to secure visitors from amongst the pilgrims to Pushkar.

An old fakir tells the visitor to put his hand inside the chamber of the tomb, promising the fulfilment of all his desires. As soon as the hand disappears through the opening, it is grasped by an unseen hand, and a pull is felt. In the case of women visitors especially, the old fakir forbids any attempt to draw away the hand, as it is the Almighty who holds it from within. 'Your hand is in God's grasp,' says the fakir; 'you will get your heart's desire. Be prompt in the payment of a fee of Rs. 1½ for the privilege of this hand-grasp, and a like amount for the release.' After some bargaining the confederate in the tomb lets the hand go.

Sivanarayan remonstrated with the guardian of the tomb, and asked him to be content with what the visitor willingly paid.

'You are a fakir yourself,' he said, 'what have you to do with these things? You have seen what there is to see. Now go.' His departure was hastened, and a garland of flowers was hung round his neck, and flowers put in his hands.

Some Mahomedan gentlemen of the neighbourhood, who had heard all this, promised to inquire into the matter and stop all fraudulent practices.

On his way to Eombay Sivanarayan passed through Ahmedabad and Surat. Arriving at Walkeswar, a suburban village near Bombay, he proceeded to the cremation ground by the sea-shore. He lay down on a monumental stone, whereon was inscribed the name the ashes bore in life, and covered himself from head to foot with the sheet of cloth he was wearing. Three days passed, but nobody took any notice of him. Those who brought their dead for the last rite took him to be a lunatic.

Hard by stood a *thākurbāti* or idol-house, established by wealthy Marwaris. Some sādhus of the Rāmānuja sect were in residence there. Coming in and going out they saw him from a distance, and avoided him as an unclean *murdāfarāsh*.¹

The founder of the idol-house intended it to be used as a resting-place for travelling ascetics. A pundit of the name of Jālirām was in charge, and it was a part of his duties to entertain the ascetic guests his search might discover in the country-side. Happening one day upon Sivanarayan he made a profound bow of reverence.

‘Whom are you saluting?’ asked Sivanarayan, returning his greetings.

¹ A public assistant at cremation whose touch is defilement.

‘You,’ said the pundit.

‘Who am I that you salute me?’

‘I am of the worst of mankind, constantly suffering because of attachment to worldly objects of enjoyment. I know not what in reality I am or who God is. How shall I know who you are really? This only I know, that you are a *Mahātmā*, a man of renunciation, one whom God has known and received. With such knowledge have I saluted you.’

‘You,’ said Sivanarayan, ‘need feel no perplexity. The being that you are I am also.’

‘The Scriptures say so, no doubt. But when by the practice of devotion, such as yours, one’s thoughts are established on Reality—the *Swarupa*—the soul’s end is consummated.’

‘Even if your thoughts lack establishment on Reality, still you are in reality what you are. There is nothing to trouble you.’

‘Grant me the favour of informing me how long you have been here and what arrangements are made about you. Has anybody seen you?’

‘I have been here three days. Many people have seen me, but nobody has spoken to me.’

‘Order from me what food you want, and I shall bring it. Or come with me to the *thākur-bāti*, where there is suitable accommodation for such as you. Many men of wealth and wisdom will come to see your feet.’¹

¹ A reverential way of saying ‘you’.

'I have no concern with men of wealth and learning. Nothing need be said about me to any one. If you feel inclined you can send me something to eat.'

'I could do that or bring it here myself. But being burning ground, people feel a repugnance about coming here. Be pleased to accompany me to the *thākurbāti*.'

Sivanarayan rested at the idol-house after the meal. Merchants of the pundit's acquaintance came to see him there. Before departure they invited him to sanctify their places of abode with the dust of his feet.

'It is an error to think of your dwellings as otherwise than holy,' said Sivanarayan, and responded to the invitations.

One of his visits was to Brahmin Jey Kissen, a celebrated pundit of that place, at whose house some important questions were discussed.¹

During his stay a Marwari merchant named Jwahir Mull, one of the founders of the idol-house, became much attracted by Sivanarayan's teachings and attached to him personally.

¹ See Appendix I.

CHAPTER VII

The pundit—The outcast—A transformation—The honoured guest—A parable—Siva in a mortal form—The devotee—The hypocrite—The god unmasked—Return to Walkeswar—Under police suspicion—A holy Lothario—The Dog-god—The Nizam's Hyderabad—The city Superintendent—Bālāji—Rangoji—To Madras—Rāmeswaram—The temple—Temple-worship—Rationale of worship—The silent saint—Rāma's Bridge—The three *lingas*—The 'Limbs of Virāt'—The eight forms of Siva—The evil of linga-worship as practised.

PROCEEDING towards the sacred river Godaverry, Sivanarayan heard of a Brahmin who dwelt close by and was said to be well versed in the Vedas and all the allied branches of learning. He was reputed to be the very embodiment of peace, and devoted to the service of paramhansas and other holy ascetics. The wanderer came to his house, travel-stained, in tatters and unshorn. Some of the householders were worshipping in the temple of Siva attached to the dwelling, some making their daily offerings in the fire, while others seated in front of the house were studying the Vedas.

'Who are you,' shouted the pundit, annoyed, 'whence have you come, what is your business here, what caste are you?'

'I am,' said the stranger, 'the lowest outcast, none lower than myself.'

'How dare you, a low-caste fellow, approach the temple of Siva? The god is now defiled and the place desecrated. Away you go.'

'Whatever,' said the unbidden guest, 'is in its nature pure remains pure to the end; no accident can affect its purity. It is the same with the impure. If you feel, however, that my presence has defiled the temple, the god, and the neighbourhood, there is cow-dung in your house to wash away the pollution. May my offence be forgiven!'

'Don't teach me wisdom. Away with you,' raged the pundit. Sivanarayan left, and purification ceremonies were duly performed.

On the side of a small feeder of the Godavary, before a fire, sat a Brahamachāri, the disciple of a Mahātmā of Jeypore. He had done some personal service to Sivanarayan on the way. Sivanarayan, after a shave and a river bath, put on the dyed loin-cloth supplied by the Brahamachāri. He rubbed himself all over with ashes, painted three lines on his forehead in the form known as *tripundra*, and hung from his neck and arms some rosaries of *rudrāksha* beads. Sandals on feet and the ascetic's begging-bowl in hand, repeating the hallowed formula 'Sivoham' (I am Siva), he entered the pundit's temple. The whole assembly stood up in reverence and bowed

low. With joined palms they invited him to a seat and thanked their stars for the presence of such a great *Mahātmā* in their midst.

‘O thou source of mercy!’ said the pundit, ‘to what order of life dost thou belong, what rules dost thou observe in eating, and what food is acceptable to thee? Deign to enlighten us in these matters, and we shall follow thy guidance.’

‘I am,’ replied Sivanarayan, ‘a *sannyāsi*. The rules I observe in eating require my food to be prepared by an unmarried child, under twelve years of age, who shall, with his right hand alone, draw water from the well and cook my food in melted butter in a cowhouse. The least deviation from this course renders the food unfit for my use. I eat only once in a day and night, and live upon water alone, if the rules are not observed.’

‘Thou art,’ said the pundit, ‘a *Mahātmā* amongst *sannyāsis*, the preceptor of the whole world. Rest thou a while and thy food will be ready.’

No boy or girl would undertake the task under the conditions laid down. The pundit feared a breach of his duties as a householder, and gave piteous expression to his fears. One boy said he could with the right hand alone draw water from the well, knead the flour into dough, but could not without the other hand use the rolling-pin to flatten the dough-ball into the cakes called

puris, and fry them. At last a boy offered to do what was required, if rewarded with a rupee's worth of sweetmeats. The pundit agreed.

Sivanarayan sat to meal with the pundit and his household. He complained that the rules had not been strictly followed, and that he must purify the food by repeating holy texts. The juvenile cook was sent for, and finally persuaded to admit his fault. People said in wonder that the secret of no heart was hidden from Sivanarayan. The meal over, the company assembled in the outer apartments.

'You are,' said Sivanarayan, 'a learned pundit, well versed in the Vedas and other scriptures. Now tell me what good comes of scriptural studies. What thing or reality is it you call pundit, *sannyāsi*, or *paramhansa*? Are these the names of forms or expressions, or do they transcend form? Is *paramhansa* the name of bones, flesh, filth, the senses, and so forth, or is it the name of wooden sandals, rosary of beads, ashes, and brow-marks? Explain this to me.'

'My lord,' said the pundit, 'from scriptural studies come the discrimination of the real from the unreal, the recognition of the real or truth as such, steadfast inclination for truth, and dissuasion from the unreal or falsehood. Those studies generate an equal regard for all creatures, right apprehension of temporal and spiritual duties, and the means of performing those duties

properly, together with the power to use those means. The possession of these characteristics makes the pundit, and forms the true end of scriptural learning. Concerning the sannyāsis, of whom the paramhansa is the efflorescence, it is said: "The brown robe does not make *sannyās* (renunciation), the abandonment of self-identifying regard for the body is true *sannyās*. The unalterable conviction that I am not the body but the all-comprehending spirit is the characteristic mark of *sannyās*".

'If,' said Sivanarayan, 'these be your thoughts, O pundit, then why did you drive away the Mahātmā in rags who visited you yesterday? And why do you show respect to me, looking at the ashes on my body and the beads on my arms?'

'That fellow,' cried the pundit, 'was an outcast, and you are a Mahātmā.'

'Should you,' said Sivanarayan, 'believe everything you are told? If a man tells you he is the creator of God would you believe him respectfully? What would be the use of your Vedic learning if you did? It was I who once told you I was an outcast, and now having changed the appearance of my body—the disguise worn by the soul—I say "Sivoham". You despised me then, because in your sight my external appearance was contemptible, and now, because that appearance is different, you respect me as your guru. Fie on your punditship! The true

paramhansa has realized the unity of God and soul, his nature is the nature of God. By what mark shall you know him? You are troubling the lives of yourselves and others about purity and impurity, and yet you know not that the Supreme Spirit, manifested as Light, is purity itself, and nowise can He become impure. Abandoning all selfish impulses, receive the truth with the help of a parable I am going to tell you.

'A man of great learning, but devoid of real experience of God, approached a master enjoying the beatific vision that he might be instructed by him. He was bidden to find whatever was worse than himself. Pursuing his quest he happened upon his own excrement, and deemed himself successful. "Wretch!" cried the loathsome object, reading his thoughts, "touch me not. I was offered in a golden bowl for the delectation of the gods; you received me as holy, and I nourished you. Contact with you has reduced me, your benefactor, to the condition you see, and you are returning hatred for the good you have received from me. Far from appreciating the good in your benefactor it seems your part to proclaim what in him is not good. Shame on your understanding! You are ungrateful. It is useless to do good to the likes of you. You are regardless of the good you get from your benefactor. You praise or blame according to

external appearances. You are repelled by me, your benefactor, because of the condition I am in. If for your good the Supreme Spirit manifests Himself in a lowly form, you will turn away from Him because His form is not grand in your sight. This is the reason why God, who is self-manifest, is not manifest to you. If in mercy He approaches to touch your heart, you drive Him away with blows. You have lost your discernment completely. When by contact with you the food of the gods is turned into foul filth, how much fouler are you!"

"Now," said the master when the disciple in shame and disgust related his experience, "now that your pride has been shattered, God is not far away from you. Seek refuge in Him, the all-comprehending Light, the world's Parent, Teacher, and Soul. He is the ruler of hearts, and by inward prompting He will discover to you all that is hidden, and remain what He is, comprehending you and all things, visible and invisible, one and indivisible, self-manifest. He or you, transcending purity and impurity, is or are, according to difference of conditions, pure or impure."

'It is true, my lord,' said the pundit when the parable ended, 'the intoxication of worldly science is blinding. It is hard indeed to understand the glories of God. I crave forgiveness for my offence.'

'Ask forgiveness of God, and rest in peace and sobriety, reflecting upon the real nature of the Forgiver and the forgiven.'

Returning the holy habit to its owner Sivnarayan went his way. In an extensive field he happened upon four persons, holy sannyāsis to look at. Round the head of the chief was coiled a great length of matted hair. They met a simple-minded rustic. The subordinate members of the group took him aside and announced to him tidings of marvellous import.

'Behold,' said they, 'the Lord Siva. The holy being with the coils of matted hair is Mahādeva¹ himself, displaying a human form. Moved by great pity we reveal to you the divine secret. Prostrate yourself at his feet, and he will grant your heart's desire.'

The man of transparent simplicity did as he was told, and received on his hand a drop of water wrung out of the mighty god's hair.

'This drop of Ganges² water,' said the supernatural being, 'will secure to you all that is good. Great is your good fortune that you have set eyes on me. Obey those who have procured for you this blessed vision.'

Thus exhorted, the mortal favoured of the gods was led a little way apart, and was advised by

¹ Literally, the great god, a name of Siva.

² It will be remembered that in Kailās mother Ganges dwells in Siva's hair.

one of his instructors to place all his ready cash on Siva's feet to furnish forth a *ganjā*¹ debauch. Following the disinterested advice, the rustic was rewarded by a slap on the back from Siva's own hand and an assurance from Siva's own lips of a future translation to Kailās.

The favoured worshipper of Siva, meeting a neighbour who was attending to some urgent requirements of his own in an unobserved part of the field, narrated to him the story of his exceeding good fortune. In emulation, no doubt, of his interlocutor's piety, he prostrated himself before him of the matted locks, and, expressing grief at his want of present means to do the great god fitting reverence, insistently prayed for the favour of being accompanied to the village, where the requisite means could be procured. What god was ever proof against the fervour of prayer? The whole party found their way to the village *modi*'s shop. But mysterious are the iniquities of the human heart. The majesty of the Lord of Kailās, instead of attracting worship, drew upon himself the assiduous attentions of the graceless police. The holy visitants of earth were unmasked, and found to be members of a wandering gipsy (*bedia*) gang. The glorious matted locks were but rough wool, fixed with *bael* gum,² and calculated to retain moisture for

¹ *Cannabis Indica*.

² The Indian wood-apple.

a long time. This impious worshipper had met¹ with Siva in a mortal form once before.¹

In the course of his wanderings Sivanarayan returned to Walkeswar and stayed four days there. He made preparations for a journey to Rāmeswaram through the Tamil country. His old acquaintance Jwahir Mull, to save such a long journey on foot, purchased for him a railway ticket to a station in the Tamil country, and pressed upon him a money present on the ground that not being in monkish habit he would want the consideration shown to an ascetic. The money was refused, but he was persuaded to start in a long coat which Jwahir Mull procured for him.

Just about that time a sannyāsi had run away with a merchant's daughter and her jewels, worth Rs. 10,000 to 12,000. The descriptive roll and authority for arrest of the holy Lothario had been telegraphed all along the railway line. At a station about a hundred and twenty miles from Bombay the police searching for the girl-stealer came upon Sivanarayan, who, it so happened, had the same name. This identity of names aroused suspicion, and he had to leave the train. In accompanying the police he remarked that all places to him were the same, as it was desirable that men in different places should

¹ Other such instances of imposture within Sivanarayan's experience are collected in Appendix II.

have opportunities for the removal of their errors.

A crowd collected round him on the platform, and the European Inspector had no doubt of his being the person wanted. The guard in charge of the train said he had been seen off at Bombay by persons of position and respectability. But the suspicions of the police were not allayed until it was found that he did not answer to the tardily produced descriptive roll. Sivanarayan was then allowed to resume his seat, and the train steamed off.

The temple of the Dog-god stands on the river about eight miles from the nearest railway station. The holy image inside is known as the god Vitthal, which means a dog. Four gates guarded by pāndās give access to the inner enclosure, which again has four gates similarly guarded. Admission fee is levied at the gates, and the pilgrim approaches the temple, where butter with candied sugar is offered to the god. The temple is infested by expert cutpurses. The loss is usually discovered by the victim on his return to the bazaar. On complaints being made to the pāndās they say the man must blame himself, that his loss has been caused by his sins, for the expiation of which further money gifts to the god are recommended.

'When,' said one of the defrauded to his priestly counsellor, 'when a visit to the shrine

and the god did not remove my sins, how would a money gift succeed?’

Leaving the pāndā speechless the unfortunate victim of holy zeal had to beg his way home.

Hyderabad in the Nizam’s State led Sivaramayan to reflect upon the absence of a whole-hearted desire on the part of the rulers for their subjects’ good. Revenue was all that they wanted; and for lavish expenditure on ostentatious display.

‘Are you,’ inquired of him the City Superintendent, a State official, ‘are you a Hindu or a Mahomedan fakir?’

‘Is fakirhood the exclusive property of the Hindu or the Mahomedan?’ was the reply.

‘Were you born a Hindu or a Mahomedan —this is what I want to know?’

‘True fakir is he from whom all personal motives (*fikir*) have departed and who has God alone left to him. If he thinks of himself as a Hindu or a Mahomedan he is neither a fakir nor a Mahātmā.’

‘Consider this, sir,’ said the official: ‘I am a Mahomedan, I eat beef. Are you allowed to eat beef?’

‘What merit is there in a man eating or not eating beef? If there were merit in eating beef it would belong equally to the dog, the jackal, and the tiger. Each creature lives upon its God-appointed meat. Merit there is none.’

‘But the Hindu would not eat beef, he looks on it with abhorrence.’

‘It is the same with pork among the Mahomedans. But what does it matter? God has created all creatures out of the same substance. The cow and the hog are equally made of flesh, blood, bones, and so forth. Both are creatures of God; then why should the eating of the one be recommended and that of the other reprobated?’

‘Such is the rule of our religion. There is a curse upon that creature. The very name is so accursed that one speaking it must cry aloud, “Toba! Toba!”’¹

‘That is so. What one body of men curse another gives its blessings to.’

‘Yet all creatures are equally made of flesh and blood. I do not know for what reasons swine’s flesh is forbidden to Mahomedans.’

‘But on reflection you will find that either all should be forbidden or none. All creatures feel equally the pain of having their throats cut.’

‘What can I do, my lord, such is the tradition that has come down to us?’

He offered to pay Sivanarayan’s railway fare to Rāmeswaram, and requested a visit from him on the return journey. The wanderer declined to receive money, but accepted refreshments proffered at a Hindu confectionery shop. The

¹ ‘I repent! I repent!’

Superintendent sent a constable with him to the railway station.

Sivanarayan visited the temple of Bālāji, situated on a hill close by a settlement of sādhus of the Rāmānuja sect, and passed on to the temple of Rangoji, in which other gods of metal are enshrined besides Rangoji. For a small fee, the pāndās place Rangoji's silver crown on the pilgrim's head, but Sivanarayan being penniless was not offered that honour.¹

Arriving at Madras, Sivanarayan discovered that the merchant Jwahir Mull had seven silver in his coat, and paper money to the amount of Rs. 40. This he distributed among the poor at different places, then proceeded on his wanderings.

The temple at Rāmeswaram is an enormous pile of buildings. A large number of images—Ramā, Sitā, Sivalingam—made of stone and the eight metals,² are enshrined within. The interior of the temple is dark, and the pilgrims are shown the holy objects by artificial light. It is prohibited to touch the images or approach them too near. Induced by large gifts, the pāndās bring out by night the *lingam* wrapped up in a piece of cloth, and in secret expose it to the reverent gaze of the rich pilgrim. But under no pretence must it be touched. The pilgrim

¹ These two gods are forms of Vishnu.

² An alloy of the eight metals reckoned by Hindus, viz. gold, silver, brass, bell-metal, copper, tin, iron, and lead.

desirous of pouring water on Siva's head must do it vicariously through the pāndā, who must be suitably rewarded, the least fee being Rs. $1\frac{1}{4}$. The pāndās think only of their own gain; they never consider how the poor wretch who has begged his way for a thousand miles, will return home.

'You,' said Sivanarayan to the pāndās, 'who would not give a cup of water to the thirsty stranger at your door, although he is the true Siva, the name Siva being one out of many bestowed on him by man's imagination—you who have no waters of love to pour upon Siva, are acquiring merit by pouring water over inanimate pieces of metal and stone.'

'What *dharma* (religious duties) have you adopted?' questioned him the chief pāndā, by name Jagannāth.

'What is it that you call *dharma*?'

'*Dharma* is merely a word. He who is the real or eternal Being—the truth—is *dharma*. To establish the mind on truth and to regulate the speech by truth is *dharma*'

'If you know this, then why do you worship images of metal and stone, calling one Rāma, another Siva, and so forth? Where do you find Rāma and where Siva in this temple? Is the clay, metal, or stone Siva or Rāma? If any of these substances be Siva and Rāma, what, then, is the use of a pilgrimage to this spot, since

those substances, call them Siva or Rāma, are to be found everywhere? Besides, why should not man, who being gifted with intelligence is superior to those substances, be worshipped as Siva and Rāma? What use is there in worshipping images, fashioned out of inanimate substances? Is not, then, God worshipped when intelligence, that is man himself, is worshipped, since God is omnipresent and the ruler of all hearts?

'There is,' said Jagannāth, 'no mistake in what you say. It is wholly true. But men accept not truth nor reverence it. Untruth and deceit are always accepted with them. Consider this. If I ask a rich man for assistance to maintain my family, he will either refuse, or having given once will seek to recover his gift with interest. But the holy images located in this temple attract pilgrims with rich gifts from great distances. They accomplish the journey at great trouble and expense, and consider themselves amply rewarded by a sight of the images and the permission to make gifts of money and rich garments. The gods of stone do not need these offerings, but they are useful to us. The holy sages have established these institutions so that poor people like ourselves may be maintained at the expense of the rich; else why need we practise deceit?'

Jagannāth persuaded Sivanarayan to accept

his hospitality, and made proper arrangements for his comfort and convenience.

On the seashore, in the midst of a jungle, there is a building called 'Rāma's Window'.¹ It is two-storied, open on all sides, and about two miles from the Rameswaram temple. Close by is the *āsan*² or seat of the silent saint. People said he was a perfect being, who neither ate nor drank, who had none of the physical needs of man, in short was god-like. All visitors to 'Rāma's Window' after prostrations laid before him offerings of money. The silent saint sat like a stone. During a lull in the visit of pilgrims the money placed before the saint would disappear, all but a few pice, scattered in disorder. The sight of the money prompted similar offerings from those who came after. One of the pāndās proclaimed his sanctity before pilgrim assemblies, and extolled the merit of making money-offerings before him.

One night when the silent saint, bathed and purified, was digging out from underneath his *āsan* some unleavened bread called *chāpātis*, Sivanarayan drew near and coughed to attract his attention. The startled saint by signs invited him to share in the frugal repast. Accustomed to only one meal a day, Sivanarayan at first

¹ Rām Jhorokha.

² A piece of rough cloth or skin spread on the bare ground for an ascetic to rest on.

declined the proffered hospitality, but had to yield to the saint's persistent invitation which a fear of exposure evidently prompted.

'If you,' said Sivanarayan, 'have taken the vow of silence it only prohibits speaking to laymen and not to me. It must be inconvenient and troublesome for you to converse by signs alone.'

'True,' said the man of silence, 'but this is the only safeguard against being drawn into vain and empty talk. If the common people believed that I ate and drank like any of them they would cease to respect me.'

'That is so. But God Himself must eat and drink if He takes a human form. This body is made of food and drink. While there is form there must be eating and drinking. Only in the formless condition they are not. The fire, when active, must have fuel, but not when it has become quiescent and disappeared. So long as you are in this body you must eat and drink to support life. There is no shame or disgrace in it. Have your meal, and have no anxiety as to consequences.'

Sivanarayan reassured him, and was shown the hole under the saint's seat where the money offered was stored for division with the pāndā who spread his fame. The pāndā's gift of food was also concealed in the same place.

Where Rāma is said to have built his bridge to Lankā or Ceylon, Sivanarayan found stones

of different sizes scattered on all sides, but nothing to indicate the remains of a bridge. The pāndās, however, showed the stones as parts of Rāma's marvellous bridge. Some reefs in the sea were also pointed out as the bridge that was. Pilgrims are urged with zealous persistency to worship the Sivalingam at Rāmeswaram.

'What wonder is there,' said Sivanarayan to the pāndās, 'in Rāma's having crossed the sea over the bridge his followers built? Consider how many worlds and systems of worlds God has hung up in empty space. By His power clouds are maintained in place without support, and again scattered as rain. Supposing God in His inscrutable purpose assumed a human body and caused the seven seas to freeze into bridges, what would there be to wonder at? You all can see, by His laws, ordinary mortals are building bridges, running engines, and performing mechanical marvels such as none dreamed of in days gone by. Take your thoughts away from such things, and build in the ocean of mind bridges of salvation with stones of patience and the mortar of contentment. Take to your bosoms Sītā the Light, called Truth, slaying the Rāvana of ignorance with the arrow of wisdom, and joy will be yours, now and for ever.

'The Scriptures speak of three different *lingas* (literally, characteristics) of the Supreme Being, manifested as Light, in and out, and called by

you Siva, namely, the gross or matter, the subtle or force and life, and the cause or substance. The last-mentioned *linga* is formless and attributeless, beyond the reach of mind and speech; the subtle *linga* is the light, externally expressed, sun and moon, which form the twice five faculties of sensation and action; and lastly, the gross *linga* is the totality of physical objects, including the physical bodies of all creatures. The gross *linga*, that is creatures, will disappear in the subtle or light, and the light will rest in the formless, attributeless Cause. These are the *lingas* of Siva or God as declared by the Scriptures. The different forms or 'limbs' of Virāt or All, constitute the eight forms or *murtis* of Siva. As witness the *mantras* or formulæ of Siva-worship: *Kshiti Murtay Bhavay namah* (Salutation to Siva under the name of Bhava in the form of the Earth), and so forth. Earth, water, fire, air, ākāsa, moon, sun, and the ego are the eight forms of Siva. Besides these no other form of Siva is, was, or can be. Where, then, is the *linga* which you and your women-folk worship, made of earth, stone, or metal? It cannot be in the formless and attributeless, for in expression or manifestation all that is or can be are contained in the five elements, and moon, sun, and the ego. The *linga* you worship is not to be found amongst these. It is seen only in the physical bodies of creatures. Do you maintain

that the Vedas and other Scriptures enjoin the worship of a limb of men and beasts? In the Scriptures it is repeatedly set forth that according to the object worshipped so becomes the worshipper in his character, hopes, and aspirations. It is to this worship amongst the Aryan Hindus that the evil generated by the passion of lust is due. Even in dreams men and women are unable to escape from the thraldom of that passion, which follows the victim through all the consequences of a feeble body and mind. Because you have turned away from the worship of the true *linga* of God you meet at every turn with infamy and disgrace.'

CHAPTER VIII

Through Tamil and Telugu lands—The Raja of Tanjore—
Jagannāth—Two pāndās—Sanctity of the god—Suspension
of caste-rules—The dwarf in the car—Fever and fasting
of the god—His visit to his maternal aunt—Devices to
repaint the figure in secret—The mystery of uncooked
rice—The Zemindar of Nadigram—Birth and marriage
of fire—Disputes as to ceremonial—Explanation.

SIVANARAYAN, travel-stained and meekly clad, was contemptuously driven away from every temple or house in the Tamil country that he approached for food. The treatment he received at the hands of Telugu pundits was no different. 'Whence have you come, what do you want?' would ask the pundit.

'I am from Rāmeswaram on the way to Jagannāth,' would be the reply.

'What caste are you?'

Sivanarayan would not answer the question at all, nor would describe himself as belonging to the lowest caste, and the interview would invariably end with a peremptory command to go away.

These pundits and their followers made much of *āchāra* (religionism) and little of *vichāra* (spiritual discrimination). They were always busy in preserving the ceremonial cleanliness of

their bodies and clothing and articles of use; their ceremonial baths were frequent. The accidental use of a bathing-place or ghat by a sūdra rendered it unfit for them to resort there without purification ceremonies, in which cow-dung played a conspicuous part. Even a Brahmin not observing their minute and elaborate ritual of cleanliness was an outcast in their eyes. Sivanarayan said to them in season and out of season: 'Without purity of heart and steadfast attachment to God, manifested as Light, within and without, the Parent, Teacher, and Soul of all, the sacred lore of the Vedas and the subordinate Scriptures is as nothing.'

At the Raja of Tanjore's palace gate Sivanarayan was told by a Moslem sentry that the hour for the midday meal had passed. But he offered his own hospitality if his religion would not make it unacceptable. A Hindu boy brought him some uncooked pressed rice and water. The Raja, through a window, observed him at his humble repast, and sent out a servant to inquire. Apprised of the fact he ran out to Sivanarayan, distressed, barefooted, and clad in a single piece of cloth. He expressed his concern that one coming to his palace had to fast until such a late hour of the day. A meal was improvised in the Raja's presence.

'In this hot weather,' said the Raja at the end of the meal, 'how is it, my lord, that you wander

about barefooted? A pair of shoes was bought for me yesterday which I have not yet used. I shall be glad to be permitted to offer them to you, together with some wearing apparel. Whence have you come?

'I have come from the north. What I have is all that I need. I do not wear shoes, and yet I am under no restriction against wearing them.'

'Why have you travelled on foot such a long distance? If you will be so good as to tell me where you want to go I shall arrange for a railway ticket.'

'I must journey on foot, observing the condition of the people.'

'I believe you are King Janaka, and bless my destiny that I have seen you. I shall talk to you further after you have rested.'

The Mahomedan sentry received an increase of pay, and Sivanarayan was taken to an upper chamber to rest. In a little while he went out for a walk and never returned. He came to Jagannāth by keeping to the sea-coast.

There Sivanarayan found the great gate of the temple closed. Outside stood the pilgrim crowd, to whom admission through a wicket was refused without a special fee. Sivanarayan would not be stopped, and passed through the wicket without paying the fee. The priestly extortioner shouted abuse after him, and raised the cry that a madman had gained admission. In the

confusion Sivanarayan found his way to the idol-room, and stood in front of the images. The uproar drew around him a crowd of pāndās, one of whom asked him gently who he was.

'Listen,' said he. 'Listen to me collectedly and with sobriety: you ask me who I am. Have you a firm conviction touching your true self? Have you ascertained without doubt that you are this or that substance or caste? What is the substance or reality you call caste? Before you were born what was your name, your father's name and residence?'

'My lord,' said the pāndā, 'if you are a sannyāsi or paramhansa, I am the special pāndā of your class.'

'What is it that you call sannyāsi or paramhansa? Concerning what condition is that the name? For one in that condition does a pāndā exist in this wide world?'

'My lord,' said the pāndā, bowing down with joined palms, 'that name is imagined of him in whom, owing to the intimate union of the soul with the Supreme Soul, the All is seen as One, who feels "there is none else beside me". For such a one, pāndā there is none. All that you see here are imagined by man for our support. Blessed is my destiny that I have seen you. To recognize one in your condition is indeed difficult.'

'Have you,' asked another pāndā who met

him later, 'have you ceremonially seen Jagannāth? If not, bestow before the god your offerings of money and food, and distribute gift in his name. Tell me, how much will you give in money and how much in food.'

'What have I to give?' said Sivanarayan; 'even shell-money I have none: what gifts am I to make?'

'You rogue.' said the pāndā, 'have you come empty-handed to see Jagannāth? Your name and the names of your ancestors will be recorded in the temple books only if you make money gifts, and then only will the god know of your pilgrimage in his honour.'

Having learned that Sivanarayan's earthly belongings consisted in the sheet of cloth wrapped round his body, the pāndā advised him to sell it and make over to him the proceeds in the god's name.

'You are,' said Sivanarayan, 'completely destitute of mercy for the penniless pilgrim. Following your advice I must strip myself naked, selling this strip of rag for a few pieces of copper so as to furnish the requisite fee to live in the remembrance of the world's Lord.¹ But does he not dwell in all hearts? What can you or I give him? He gives to all what they have. Speak the truth. This is but a device for your own gain. Who and what substance is it that you

¹ The literal meaning of Jagannāth.

call Jagannāth? Is he formless, attributeless? If he is formless he cannot be viewed by the mind or spoken of in speech. The all-comprehending Supreme Being clothed with form is present before you as earth, water, fire, air, ākāsa, moon, and sun. According to the Vedas the all-comprehending God or Vishnu is present in these seven forms, said to be "His limbs". The sun is His eye of wisdom, the moon his mind, and so forth. He, whose name is Jagannāth or the world's Lord, is one and all-comprehending and present within all things and every creature. Of the all-comprehending supreme spirit, the teacher of all, Jagannāth is an imagined name.'

'He,' said the pāndā, 'is present within the temple in the form of an image.'

'Think,' said Sivanarayan; 'consider and tell me who has created your body with all its limbs? Which "god" is superior, your body, or the Supreme Being, the maker of your body? Say what is true, don't suppress it out of self-interest. Who has made the temple and the image in it?'

'The temple must have been built by man and the image by a carpenter, with the wood of *neem* and *bael* trees. Every twelve years a new image is made.'

'Who then ought to be worshipped as superior —the wooden image or the carpenter who made it?'

‘The carpenter. But as a matter of fact, nobody worships the image of wood. There is a hole in it and a *Sālgrām*¹ god is placed in the hole. That god is worshipped.’

‘But what is it that you call *Sālgrām*? These are but names imagined of the Supreme Spirit. He is the ruler of all hearts. He is present within and outside all things and every creature, and is one and all-comprehending. If your vision of Jagannāth and *Sālgrām* had been the Truth or real Being, then why is there no change of heart in you, despite your perpetual worship and association with them? Observe how disturbed you are by greed for the least of coins.’

‘But,’ rejoined the pāndā, ‘such is the sanctity of this place that men of all castes can eat together.’

‘Men incur no sin anywhere by eating together, only caste rules stand in the way. Religious belief has produced a dread of consequences when this is none elsewhere. Men do not eat together here out of love for God or man. The real object of this should be to learn that God is in every creature and all are included in Him, each losing hatred of one another, thereby finding peace. Spiritual wisdom, which puts an end to the feeling of separateness between man and man, is the true field (*kshetra*) of Jagannāth, where God is seen in all things and all things in God.’

‘There is, my lord,’ rejoined the pāndā, ‘great

¹ An emblem of Vishnu.

merit in obtaining a sight of Jagannāth. The sacred text says: "Jagannāth, in the form of a dwarf, being seen in his car, incarnation is abolished and emancipation secured".'

'Men, blinded by ignorance,' said Sivanarayyan, 'come at great trouble and cost to this spot from distant places to see an image of *neem* wood in a wooden car. Those who teach such necessity bring suffering upon themselves and others. The Jagannāth is the all-comprehending Being, whose expression is Light. He is the world's Parent, Teacher, and Lord. The bodies of all creatures are his car, of which the faculties of action and sensations are the wheels, the mind the horses, kept in order by the reins of spiritual instructions; and the Lord, manifested as Light, seated in this car, is doing, or causing to be done, by internal prompting, all that is done. So long as the individual soul does not see the Supreme Soul or Jagannāth in the head of the body intimately united with itself, fear and doubt about life and death do not cease. When this intimate union is realized the soul is freed from all concern about life and death—this is called emancipation from rebirths. Beside Him, who is all-comprehending, one and expressed as Light, in the wide expanse of space none other Jagannāth is, was, or can be. Of this there is no doubt. The text you cited has no other significance.'

The pāndā remained silent.

‘Why,’ continued Sivanarayan, ‘does your Jagannāth get fever, and why does he fast? Pilgrims are much inconvenienced, being prevented from seeing the god for a fortnight after the Bathing Festival (*Snānajātrī*).’

‘By using the waters of the golden well (*swarna kup*) for bath and drink Jagannāth sickens with fever. For a fortnight he fasts, taking a medicated infusion all the time, and we have to wrap him up in blankets. After that his youth is renewed and he makes a nine days’ visit to his maternal aunt, finally returning to the temple in his car.’

‘Alas! how low have you fallen! If your Jagannāth is only a figure of *neem* wood how can it get fever by drinking and bathing in foul water? Is it possible for a piece of wood to behave like a sentient being, take medicine, feel cold, or to have human relationship of aunt and nephew? The real Jagannāth or Lord of the Universe has no aunt, nor does He come and go. He is present everywhere in His plenitude.’

‘The fact is,’ struck in another pāndā, ‘the colouring of the figure fades at the end of a year, and Jagannāth is kept hidden in the temple for a fortnight to be repainted. When pilgrims assemble for the car-festival Jagannāth is revealed to public view and his renewal of youth proclaimed. The story of his fever is given out to satisfy impatient pilgrims whose devotions are

delayed. The real mystery is not known to the people.'

'The true Jagannath,' said Sivanarayan, 'is the all-comprehending Ruler of hearts. In His fullness He dwells within and outside all things and beings. He is the Lord whose manifestation is Light. The Jagannāth worshipped in this temple is but a wooden doll, not the world's true Lord. Put into the fire it will turn to ashes.'

'Are you,' said the first speaker, 'a param-hansa? I have troubled you with much vain talk without knowing you. Count not my offence against me. Grant me forgiveness. Do not let the pilgrims hear what you have said about Jagannāth, otherwise our gains will suffer.'

Wandering about the temple precincts Sivanarayan noticed a device of the pāndās to impress the pilgrims with a due sense of the sanctity of the place. In the sight of the pilgrims, pots full of rice and water are piled one on the top of another over a fire-place. When the pilgrims return to the spot they are shown that the rice in the top pots is boiled and eatable, while the contents of the pots nearest to the fire remain uncooked. Such is the majesty of the god and the holiness of his habitation. The simple-minded pilgrims take no notice of the surreptitious exchange of pots by the pāndās, or the half-cooked character of the rice put into the pots on the top.

'What is there in this to wonder at?' said

Sivanarayan, addressing the belief-makers. 'If the world's true Lord wanted to exhibit His glory He could, before your eyes, boil rice without visible fire. You can all see that in the bodies of animals He is burning up, without visible fire, fodder, food, and raw meat, and yet makes worms live within other creatures when He so wills. Are we to believe or disbelieve in Him and His power because the rice is cooked or remains raw? The all-comprehending Supreme Being is creating, maintaining, and destroying myriads of worlds while dwelling within each of you. He is giving you wisdom and salvation (*mukti*). Does nothing of this show you His glory? Before you were born you had not sentience, senses, or bodies; now you have them. Does not this inspire you with a belief in Him? Your belief can only come by the rice being cooked or left raw. What greater shame or misfortune can there be?'

Amongst those who heard, some were ashamed, some angry, but the truth found no resting-place in any heart.

Sivanarayan went to the neighbouring town of Nadigrām in the Balasore District to be present at a fire-offering (*yajna*) celebrated by the Zemindar of that place. A pundit, learned in the Yajur Veda, accompanied him. A large number of local pundits were assembled for the occasion, and a great crowd of common people.

The ceremony was performed under the direction of the local pundits. According to their traditional custom the fire is ignited after invocation (*ābhāna*), purification rites (*kushandikā*), and general worship. Then follow rites relating to the generation (*garbhādhāna*) and marriage of the Fire with *Swāhā* and *Swadhā*.¹ The custom observed by the Yajurvedic pundit omits the rites of generation and marriage. This led to a warm disputation, and Sivanarayan had to interpose.

'Listen, O learned pundits,' said he: 'to teach without understanding is fraught with evil consequences to high and low. Consider this. Having performed the rites of generation in regard to the fire you put yourselves in the position of its father. And yet the Scriptures say: "Fire is the spiritual guide of the twice-born castes". How can fire be your spiritual guide, you being the progenitors of fire? God, in His fivefold expression known as earth, water, fire, air, and *ākāsa*, is present from beginningless time. What individual can perform the rites of generation and beget them? God, expressed as fire, your spiritual guide and object of worship, is present before you as the sun, moon, stars, and lightning. He is present in all things of life, digesting food and keeping them sentient. If He becomes quiescent the body

¹ Two words used in the mantras or formulæ uttered in making offerings in the fire and conceived as deities.

gets cold, diseases come on, ending in death. What are *Swāhā* and *Swadhā* to whom you marry fire? Have they form and attributes, or are they devoid of all qualities? If the latter they are beyond the reach of mind and speech, irresponsible to the senses. From the spiritual point of view—in terms of absolute reality—God, without qualities, may be identified with, and in that sense married to, the manifested God. But can there be a marriage such as you have performed? Were the two brides in manifestation they would have been perceptible to the senses as the bridegroom (fire) is. How can a marriage be celebrated unless both parties to it are present? The fire, no doubt, is here before us, but where are the others? Are they the five-fold expressions of God, or any or none of them?’

‘My lord,’ said one of the local pundits, ‘we know not what or where those two are. We only declare what is written.’

‘Suppose,’ said he, ‘some humorist writes that, an ant swallowed up a herd of marching elephants or kicked down the Deity and devoured Him, making Him cry inside the little insect, shall you, without discrimination, accept what is written? Lack of discrimination has thrown you into a fatal inertia. You do not know God even in His expression or manifestation as Light; how, then, can you know Him in His formless, motionless, attributeless aspect?’

CHAPTER IX

At Tārakeswar—The Mohunt—The sanctity of Tārakeswar—‘Of what jail is this the prisoner?’—At Burdwan—The temple of Sarvamangalā—At Sāntipur—The hospitable pundit—His uninvited guests—The moribund house at Triveni—The Zemindar’s groom—At Dakhineswar—Kāli’s temple—The Paramhansa Rām Krishna—Kalighat—Sivanarayan’s expulsion from the temple—The true Kāli.

At the famous shrine of Tārakeswar Sivanarayan found the Mohunt, Mādhava Giri, seated in a chair, surrounded by pundits who squatted on the ground.

‘Who are you?’ asked the Mohunt, whose contempt was excited by Sivanarayan’s simple dress, and his anger kindled by the latter’s omission to salute him in due form.

‘I am the same as you are,’ said Sivanarayan.

‘How can you be the same as I?’ rejoined the exasperated Mohunt. ‘Are you a householder or a sannyāsi? If the latter, to what order do you belong—Giri, Puri, or Bhāratī?’

‘What substance is indicated by the names you have used?’

‘Don’t you know sannyāsis of the ten names?’

‘Consider calmly: when you were in the householder’s condition you had only one name; now

having had your head shaved you belong to those who bear ten names. But what have you gained by the change? What is it that you call sannyāsi? Is it red, black, blue, green, or of any other colour? Is it flesh, blood, or bone, or is it the senses? Men have these things in common with brute beasts; can a brute beast be a sannyāsi?

‘Are you,’ asked the Mohunt, ‘a paramhansa? What Shāstras have you studied, and what is your name? Be seated here and at ease.’

‘Whether I have studied the Shāstras or not you will know, but how can I say what my name is, so many are given me? Someone will call me “O sādhu”, and I answer “O father”. Then Sādhu becomes my name; others call me sannyāsi, paramhansa, madman, concubine’s brother (*sālā*), and so forth, and I get those names. In this way the names I get are without number, and I answer to them all; I cannot tell what my true name is.’

The pundits respectfully stood up and invited Sivanarayan to be seated.

‘Have you,’ asked the Mohunt, ‘visited the god Tāraknāth?’

‘Where is Tāraknāth, and what is his form?’

‘He is in the temple, sanctifying it with his presence.’

‘Is he present in any form, or is he formless?’

If formless, though unseen, he is everywhere. If he has any form he will be readily perceptible. You can perceive the forms in which God is expressed—earth, water, fire, air, ākāsa, moon, and sun. The same light is called the moon by night, and the sun by day. The whole universe, consisting of what moves and moves not, is He. Beside these no other form of God exists or can exist. Which of them is Tāraknāth? Is Tāraknāth dust, clay, or the temple, or the stone inside the temple, or is he something that dwells in the stone? If he be the clay, stone, or dust, then there being no end to the houses, temples, hills, and mountains composed of such materials, and the earth being present everywhere, say which of them is Tāraknāth? Even if Tāraknāth be something that dwells in the stone, that something must be included in the fivefold expression of God. Then, what is the use of coming here to see him? If you had recognized Him of whom Tāraknāth is but an imagined name, and established your faith on Him, He would not have visited you with such misfortune.¹

‘What misfortune are you referring to? Have you observed the glory of Tāraknāth? Countless sick people come here, and by fasting induce the god to perform miracles of healing in their

¹ This Mohunt underwent a term of imprisonment for adultery.

favour. The cure is revealed to the sufferer or his deputy¹ in a dream, or the appropriate remedy is actually put into his hands miraculously. This place is so holy that it attracts more pilgrims than any other shrine. How do you explain this?

'That is so,' said Sivanarayan, 'but consider this. A man desirous of establishing a market for his own benefit proclaims to traders that by coming to that market their expenses will be small and their gains great. This is believed and the market flourishes. Jugglers attract spectators by the beat of drums. But are we on that account to worship the juggler or the market-place, as filled with divine glory? If you say that Tāraknāth is to be worshipped as the healer of the sick, then why don't we worship medical practitioners who cure diseases by their science? They have this advantage besides—being animate they can do much else. If Tāraknāth is to be worshipped as the giver of dreams, and this place to be deemed holy on account of dreamers here dreaming dreams, then because there are many means of inducing dreams, and dreams are dreamed in every house, ought we to worship those means as Tāraknāth and all houses as Tārakeswar? Many sick men are cured of disease by eating roots and herbs,

¹ Austerities to secure a miracle at this shrine may be performed through a deputy.

picked by other men. The fact is, diseases are removed by suitable means, appointed by God to that end. Inappropriate remedies cannot effect a cure. While some diseases are cured without any special remedy, running their natural courses, others end only with death. Such is God's law. If against such law we kill ourselves by beating our heads on the steps of Tāraknāth's temple the disease will not go. Consider for a moment. The facts are all before you. You were guilty of an offence. To avoid the consequences, personally and by deputy, you worshipped Tāraknāth assiduously. But your punishment was not averted. Why was this so? Had he been the true God he would have purified your heart with wisdom, and heard your prayer. Darkness cannot exist in a lighted place, nor in the true Being who is Manifestation itself. God wished your imprisonment, and to prison you had to go. A similar fate overtook the Raja of Puri. Had you had but faith in the true God, He would have saved you from all troubles and afflictions. Your devotion is from the lips and not from the heart. I do not wish to give you pain for its own sake. But as the diseased limb must be removed by the surgeon's knife to improve the health of the whole body, so by unpleasant words of truth the dark veil of ignorance must be lifted from the mind. The wise receive such wounds with patience, and accept the truth in all things.

‘Furthermore, is the true Tāraknāth (literally, the Saviour Lord) able to remove evil only at Tārakeswar? Can He not cure every man in His own home, is He not omniscient, is there any power that He has not? Has He such foolish partiality as to say: “I shall not cure this man, for he has not come to my house to perform austerities”? Were it true that diseases are cured by austerities at Tārakeswar, disappointment would have been unknown to devotees, and doctors superfluous. If a man has faith in the true God, whose manifestation is Light, though he leave not his home, God who removes all sufferings of the flesh and spirit will cure him. But faith is not always strong enough to give rest to the mind by reliance only on Him. Those alone whose faces are turned away from that all-comprehending Supreme Being can believe in the holiness of particular places; they cannot believe that the plenitude of Godhead dwells in all things and in each of them.

‘Finally, remember that the Scriptures say, as is the object worshipped so will the worshipper be. The emblem of shame you worship in metal and stone troubles your minds with inordinate lusts of the flesh, and wisdom passes by you unheeded. No one worships the true characteristics (*lingam*) of God as the gross or matter, the subtle or force, and the cause or substance. An endless stream of misery flows from such impiety.’

‘It is true, my lord,’ said the Mohunt, ‘but faith comes not without God’s grace, and He is not received as everywhere present in His plenitude.’

Sivanarayan accepted the Mohunt’s hospitality. Close by the bungalow of eight thatches (*ātchālā*) where he rested, a monk, perfected in God, according to common report, was receiving the homage of a large crowd.

‘Of what jail,’ inquired the monk concerning a woman whose personal ornaments tinkled as she passed, ‘of what jail is this the prisoner?’

‘My lord,’ said the object of his jest, ‘I belong to that jail in which you were a prisoner for nine months. A shaven head and a dress dyed brown have given you the prideful right of calling yourself a sannyāsi. But is it not to your shame? What were you before you were born? Even now you are a prisoner to spiritual pride.’

‘Mother,’ said the sannyāsi with joined palms, ‘I salute you humbly. Your words of wisdom have opened my eyes. You are my *guru*.’

From Tārakeswar Sivanarayan went to Burdwan.

In front of the temple of Sarvamangalā a crowd of Brahmins and sādhus was assembled. It was enjoined by the Raja, whose ancestors had founded and endowed the temple, that people should be fed out of the offerings made to the idol. A temple official took in Brahmins known

to him; the passport for strangers was their sacred thread.

A low-caste man from Ghazipur, whom Sivanarayan had met on the way, showed the sacred thread round his neck and was admitted in the company of Brahmins. As he returned to the temple gate Sivanarayan exhorted him not to practise deception by wearing the thread. He professed penitence, but was soon after found in the public gardens—*Gulāb Bāg*¹—disguised as a Brahmin.

Some wandering friars were at the door. By birth they belonged to the 'twice-born' castes. But with the renunciation of the world they had put away the holy thread. The official did not accept the account they gave of themselves, and the absence of the caste insignia resulted in their ignominious expulsion. One of them as spokesman requested that they might be supplied with plain rice, not desiring any delicacy of fare. They were bidden to be still. After a long while the request was repeated, stressing the lateness of the hour and their wandering profession; but they were answered that the feeding of the strangers was over for the day.

Sivanarayan, however, observed the temple authorities selling for a mere trifle rich dishes to people of the lowest castes.

Arriving at the house of a pundit at Sāntipur,

¹ Literally, the Garden of Roses.

Sivanarayan found him engaged in a learned disputation on the correct grammatical form of the last word in the holy formula of Brahminic faith—the *Gāyatri*. Three paramhansas from Benares, unasked guests to the house, were receiving the honours enjoined by the sacred law, when Sivanarayan approached them. The extreme simplicity of his attire prevented a hospitable reception. One of the paramhansas made him take a seat near himself and spoke to him words of civility.

‘Who are you,’ inquired a pundit, ‘what is your caste, where do you live, are you a householder or an ascetic? If an ascetic, where is your dyed robe and rosary of *rudrāksha* beads?’

‘I am a man,’ said Sivanarayan; ‘I am of the lowest class, an outcast. I am a dweller in the city of Truth (Satyapur). I don’t know whether I am a householder or an ascetic. I have heard those terms, but of what things they are the names I do not know. I see this, that all men have bodies composed of the five elements, the senses and organs of all are alike, and speech issues from the subtle part of all men. What things are householder and ascetic? Deign please to explain to me.’

‘You can see with your own eyes that three great-souled ascetics of the highest order of sanctity are seated here.’

‘If these are ascetics so are you. Of the

substance they are, you are. Whatever is in them is in you.'

'What Shāstras have you studied, and where have you studied them?'

'Where my speech has its origin all Shāstras are studied.'

'Who has taught you?'

'The all-embracing Dweller in the heart. To me learning and non-learning are the same.'

'What is your name?'

'The names by which men call me are countless in number. I answer to them all.'

'What is your food,' asked the pundit, to test if Sivanarayan was a paramhansa, 'and from whose hands do you take it?'

'I eat what is food for man. I take it from the hands of whoever gives it.'

'Shall you eat from the hands of a Moslem or an Englishman?'

'I see no difference between yourselves and a Moslem or an Englishman. All are alike formed by the five elements. If I could find distinct things called "Moslem" and "Englishman" I might object to receive food from their hands. If you say they eat what is forbidden to you, then you must know that many, calling themselves Hindus, eat the same things. Besides, if I hate them I shall be guilty of hating the all-comprehending Supreme Being. The Lord Krishna says: "I, taking shape as fire, am seated

in the bodies of living beings and, united with the upward and downward breath, digest the four kinds of food ".¹

Hoping to resume the conversation some other time, the pundit showed the way to where food was laid out for the guests. Sivanarayan and one of the paramhansas began to eat. The other two would not eat from their own hands, so the pundit placed balls of rice in their open mouths. The others ate but little; Sivanarayan, because of his appetite, forfeiting his character for sanctity. None spoke to him after the meal.

'Does constant association and union with the Supreme Being, who is sentience itself, add to a man's consciousness, or does it take away from it?'

'Adds,' said the pundit in answer to Sivanarayan. 'But why this question?'

'The reason for my question is this. An impression prevails that one in the condition of a paramhansa eats but little, and that not with his own hands. But men do not see that the whole universe, moving and stationary, is the body and organ of the Great Lord, Virāt. What do I lose if I eat with my own hands, and what do I gain if I am fed by others? Has God made my hands powerless and only my mouth active? Shame on such thought and practice! It is but slavery for the sake of honour from men. God is the Master, and for our welfare we must obey

¹ *Bhagavad Gitā*, ch. xv, v. 14.

Him in all things. So also concerning the quantity of food required by an individual. Each engine has to be fed with water and coals sufficient for the work it has to do. To eat as others direct is a cause of trouble.'

The abstemious ascetics left soon after for a walk by the Ganges side. Sivanarayan happened upon them at a solitary spot, munching some parched rice procured from a neighbouring *modi* shop. To remove their embarrassment and confusion he pointed out to them that hunger and thirst visit us by God's law, and there is neither sin nor shame in satisfying them as they come.

Crossing the Ganges, Sivanarayan, in the course of his wanderings, rested near the *ghāt* at Triveni, in the room intended for Hindus desirous of yielding up their last breath on the banks of the holy river. It was afternoon, and boys on their way home from school were trooping past. They began pelting him with brickbats. A gentleman came by and asked the reason. The boys said that either a ghost or a madman was in the sacred room of Death and was abusing them.

The new-comer shouted to know who the stranger was. Sivanarayan beckoned him inside the room and told him that the boys were not to blame. Their characters were moulded by the training they had received. As they were taught so they behaved. He saluted Sivanarayan respectfully, and, begging him to rest a while, promised

to return after apprising the villagers of his presence. To avoid a crowd Sivanarayan left the place, and passed the night under a tree.

Next day a zemindar's servant meeting him on the road asked him to take service with the zemindar as a groom. Sivanarayan accompanied him. Unknown to the servant and against his instructions, Sivanarayan found his way to the zemindar's presence. The latter, startled, offered him a seat, to the amazement of the assembled company. But there were some present who thought he might be a man of God.

Questioned as to his visitor, the zemindar said they could all see he was a plain man, and so should attend to their own business. At his invitation Sivanarayan stayed the meal, and, after some conversation on spiritual topics, left him.

Sivanarayan came to Kāli's temple at Dakhineswar, near Calcutta. The keeper of the temple was in conversation with a Brahamachāri, who was seated under a tree. In answer to the former the new-comer said: 'You can see I am a man. My home is in the city of Truth. My name is Unreality. I am coming from the city of Illusions.'

'What is the rascal saying? What are you? Have you studied any Shāstras?'

'What is the object of questioning me about the study of Shāstras?'

‘There is an object. Are you a householder or an ascetic?’

‘What thing is a householder, and what an ascetic? How do they look? Where are they to be found?’

‘Don’t you see an ascetic here?’ said the keeper, pointing to the Brahmachāri.

‘I see a man with matted hair. What is in him that you should call him an “ascetic”? I find in him only that which I find in all men. Why do you call him an ascetic?’

The Brahmachāri interposed in anger: ‘It is unintelligible what he says. He is muttering like a lunatic. Seize him and take him to the Paramhansa Rām Krishna; he will find out by conversation what sort of a man this is.’

Sivanarayan accompanied the temple official to where Rām Krishna was lying down to rest. They gazed on each other for some time. The temple-keeper, breaking the silence, roughly bade Sivanarayan sit down.

‘Are you an ascetic or a householder?’ asked Rām Krishna when the preliminaries were over. ‘If an ascetic, to what sect do you belong? If a householder, to what caste? Where do you come from?’

‘Don’t you know to what caste you and I belong, whence we have come, of what sect we are, and whether we are ascetics or householders? With the spirit’s eye have you ever seen an

ascetic or a householder? The way of the world counts endless sects and castes. But for the true ascetic, whose sole end is truth, what sect or caste can there be?’

‘That is true indeed, but there are such divisions in the eyes of the world, and so they must be spoken of.’

‘One plunged in figments of the mind must speak of them, but why should he, whom these do not affect, search for them?’

‘If those figments have ceased to act, then only may you speak thus.’

‘Have they not ceased for you in all this time? He who is pursuing the truth as his sole goal, planted firm on the true path, sees only the truth. He who is immersed in figments of the mind or Māyā sees but figments.’

‘Is the truth manifest to you?’

‘How can I answer this question?’

‘Are you a paramhansa, charged with the duties of an ascetic? Whoso contains the truth is an ascetic. The characteristic of that condition is the utterance of truth. He in whom the conflict of truth and untruth or reality and appearance has ceased, leaving truth alone manifested, without obstruction, is a paramhansa.’

‘If you are of that condition, then what is the use of these questions, about that which only seems? Why should one to whom that condition is actual ask such questions as these? But

one who, having heard the words of the Scriptures, is doubtful about his condition, would naturally inquire about such matters, because the condition is really not his.'

'Do you think I rest contented with merely hearing the words of the Scriptures, and that that is why I am asking these questions? Have you come here to instruct me in wisdom?'

'As the fire is known by its smoke, so your words make everything known.'

'This rascal,' said the temple official, under his breath although he intended to be overheard, 'has come to instruct our paramhansa in wisdom! Let him be seized and sacrificed before the goddess.'

'What,' asked Rām Krishna, 'is the rule about your food? Do you eat meat and fish or only vegetables?'

'Only vegetables. But order as you think best.'

A vegetarian meal was ordered. The temple official abused him for eating copiously. At the end of the meal he went outside the temple and sought rest in an outer building. Towards evening a man came to take him to Rām Krishna. But he refused to go. They tempted him by promises of sweetmeats and other delicacies, and having failed in their object threatened to drag him by the legs or to break his bones with splinters of wood. The threats, however, were

not carried out, and Sivanarayan departed in peace.

Next evening Sivanarayan sat down in a corner of the *Nāt Mandir*¹ (dancing pavilion) at Kalighat. When a third part of the night had passed one of the temple officials told him to go away. Permission to spend the night there was refused as against the commands of Mother Kāli and the orders of the Government. On inquiry it was elicited that this was really owing to the very recent theft of the goddess's jewellery and ornaments.

'Ornaments of Mother Kāli!' exclaimed Sivanarayan. 'Does she wear them like a weak mortal woman, and is she, like them, unable to protect her property? How can she then protect the world?'

'Do you, fellow, know her truly?' was the question in return.

'Had you, who are her vaunted guardians,' continued Sivanarayan, 'known her truly, your present burden of suffering would have fallen away. What you call Mother Kāli is, I can see, but an image, fashioned by man's hands out of earth, wood, stone, and metal. Her head and three eyes are scooped out of a block of stone. A rod supporting the head is built round with lime and mortar, the breasts are but metal, and

¹ Outer building belonging to a temple and set apart for dances during festivals.

bamboos form the back part. The four hands of metal are decorated with golden ornaments, and a golden tongue is put into the mouth. Which of these is Mother Kāli? If she is the stone, then mountains, curry-stones, and the stone cups for domestic use are also she. If she is the gold, then all gold ornaments worn by man and woman are she. If the mortar and metal be she, then all modifications of earth, which are everywhere manifest, are she. What special recognition is to be given here? If you say she is in these things, then tell me further, has she a form or is she formless? If the latter, she must be invisible, omnipresent. If the former, then she must be responsive to the senses. Search for the Mother Kāli who really is. Sink not further in error. Open your eyes and see the all-comprehending Being, manifested as Light, day and night.'

The interlocutor, by way of reply, took Sivanarayan by the nape of his neck and put him outside the temple precincts.

'This is no fault of yours,' said Sivanarayan, smiling. 'Your intelligence partakes of the nature of the stock and stone you worship as divinity. You give honour to the inanimate clay you preserve in your temple, and ignominiously drive away Sentience, which is the true Siva.'

It was a rainy winter night. Wilful exposure

in such weather was an offence against the indwelling spirit. Sivanarayan begged for shelter in all the neighbouring houses, but found none. He was constrained to pass the night on the ghāt of Tolly's Nulla.

Next morning Sivanarayan met a man who was reading a newspaper. He told him deploringly that the Hindu Rajas were all dying out.

'It is the result,' replied Sivanarayan, 'of turning away from the all-comprehending Supreme Being, who is the Truth, the Parent, Teacher, and Soul of all.'

'In accordance with the Scriptures and the ways of men,' added Sivanarayan in the course of the conversation, 'the foreheads of Mother Kāli, Hanumān, Ganes, and other Hindu deities are painted with vermillion, and all your gods and goddesses are to be meditated upon in the sun. The reason for this is that the sun assumes, morning and evening, a red hue, which is represented by the red paint. Mother Kāli is a name of the all-comprehending Supreme Being. The light, called sun and moon, spreading over the earth and sky, is her tongue. With the sword of knowledge she preserves the unity of the individual soul with God, its true essence. In the head of a man are tied in a knot, as it were, the strings of consciousness, passing through the eyes, ears, nostrils, and mouth, and known as light, ākāsa, air, and fire. This same light

coursing through all the bones of the body is performing all the functions of life, great and small. This is symbolized by the garland of skulls round her neck. The head in her hand shows her power over all. The four internal faculties—*instruments of the soul*, and known as the intellect, affections, will, and egotism—are her four hands. The all-comprehending Supreme Being, manifested as Light, has been imagined to be all the gods and goddesses of the pantheon. Besides that One no other god or goddess is, was, or can be. This is the reason why all gods and goddesses have, according to the *Shāstras*, to be meditated upon in the sun. If you hold your hearts steadfast on this Being you will gain the true end of existence, spiritual and temporal. If this One had not been the only true object of worship, the *Shāstric* injunction about meditation in the sun and offerings in the fire, in the name of all the gods and goddesses, would have been meaningless. The different parts or “limbs” of this One, as appearing to man’s intelligence, are conceived of as individual gods and goddesses. Thus we hear of earth, water, fire, air, *ākāsa*, moon, and sun divinities. These seven elements form the outer or gross and inner or subtle body of man. It is for this reason that we worship the 330 millions of gods and goddesses, including in their number the tortoise, the fish, the hog, the dog, and the maiden. From the lowest

worm to the lordliest man, the one God is seen. Every woman is the Devi and every man Siva. This is true beyond doubt or dispute.'

'How can we,' said Sivanarayan's interlocutor, 'directly worship the Supreme Being? We are not fit to receive Him. We must therefore worship images.'

'Very well,' said Sivanarayan, 'but consider this. If a child, in the years of unreason, be separated from his parents and has no other aid to search them out save by photographs, he must compare those he meets with the likenesses he possesses. Of what avail are the likenesses if they do not help him to recognize his true parents? Image-worship is useless if it helps not the worshipper to recognize the all-comprehending Supreme Being, manifested as Light. Cast away all empty forms and learn to know truly the real Author of your being. He is full of goodness, and will save you from all evils.'

CHAPTER X

Fyzabad—Rāma's temple—Rāma, living and dead—The story of Rāma—‘These be allegories’—Mol ameh—‘Hindu ascetics are liars’—‘Show us your God’—Gauhati—Vasistha's Hermitage—Muktināth—Gaya—Man gives salvation to man—The undying banyan.

PASSING through many places Sivanarayan reached Fyzabad, the city noted as the birthplace of Rāma, the divine hero. Moslem hands have reared a mosque on the site of his overthrown ancient temple. Close by has arisen a modern building, enshrining Rāma's image. Sivanarayan had hardly sat down in a corner of the temple when the door of the inner sanctuary was closed, the offering of food to the image having ended. A sādhu, a stranger, just arrived, opened the door, and immediately the ascetics of the Rāmā-nuja sect, in charge of the temple, fell upon him with sticks and drove him out with abuse. The sādhu received this treatment in silence and departed smiling.

‘Ye Hindus,’ said Sivanarayan, moved by the scene enacted before his eyes, ‘have lost your reason completely. He, whom you would worship with food, after his long exile from your hearts, appears before you in a sentient form;

you welcome him with blows, giving your worship and devotion to an image of stone. Why has God so blinded you? Your fathers were strong in the strength which comes from worshipping the living God, and you their children have grown lifeless by worshipping what has no life; in self-oblivion you pass your days in loud lamentations. Confusing friends and foes, you waste your days in hate, contention, and strife. Peace sheds not a ray upon you.'

'Who may you be?' asked one of the holy fathers; 'know you not the glory of Rāma? When his slave Hanumān can devour or put under one arm the great sun in the sky, how infinitely greater must be the master's majesty!'

'That Hanumān, whose face was burned by fire, causing him to plunge in the ocean for coolness, that this god who was burned by fire, which is but a small spark of that sun, should yet be able to treat in the way mentioned the sun is indeed strange. But our holy books are full of allegories, so hard to unravel. Try to understand the true explanation. The man of understanding, beloved of God, is called Hanumān in the books. The all-comprehending Supreme Being, symbolically manifested as Light —the sun in his twelve aspects, as the pundits say, one for each month of the year—includes in Himself all creatures, male and female, and is everlastingly present, indivisible, and one. The

twelve aspects are the various faculties of action and sensation, the affections and intelligence. By His grace alone is He found without difficulty. To take these twelve to heart as one and indivisible is to devour the sun or put the sun under the arm. The true Hanumān is he who can view these twelve as one, identical with himself and God. Such a one alone can know God truly. The real Hanumān, by his discriminative intellect, perceiving within and outside of him Sītā, the Universal Mother, the beneficent supreme energy, communicates with the individual soul, addressing it thus: "Thou, the attributeless, transcendent Deity, art identical with the Universal Mother. At the griefless root¹ of this tree of conditioned existence—in God Himself—she dwells hidden from view by the dark powers of the great captor, Egotism or Rāvana. Shoot the arrow of knowledge from the divine bow—OM—and kill this Rāvana. Then, united to her, thou shalt reign in the northern regions", by which is meant the head or truth. "Thou art That", there is none else beside. Missing the inner truth of the allegory, you have adopted the monkey as your god, slowly approximating to the nature of this animal.

'You all have intelligence. Exercise that

¹ According to the legend, Sītā was by her abductor, Rāvana, kept a prisoner in a grove of *Asoka* trees. *Asoka* literally means 'the griefless'.

faculty in everything. If any say you are disembodied ghosts, even though alive, shall you accept it as true or reject it as false? You do not perceive that the light you can see as the sun and moon is self-manifest and has no gross body to be grasped. How, then, is it possible for a monkey with four hands and a tail to swallow or seize the light?

'You read how Rāma, instructed by the sage Agastya, worshipped the light with prostrations and offerings, and by the strength thus obtained succeeded in slaying Rāvana. And yet you fable about Rāma's servant—Hanumān—swallowing or seizing the light.

'The Supreme Being, attributeless and possessed of attributes, visible and invisible, whose expressive symbol is light—sun and moon—is eternal, self-existent, and one, including in Himself matter, sentience, and cause, the moving and the stationary. The individual, who by the worship of this Being obtains wisdom, is typified as Hanumān.'

'By your favour,' said one of the assembled sādhus, 'we have gained much knowledge. Now deign to explain the true significance of the worship of Sakti (Divine Energy) by Rāma.'

'The Supreme Being manifested as Light,' said Sivanarayan, 'is the Divine Energy. Worshipping Him on three days in His triple aspect—matter, sentience, and cause—Rāma killed or conquered

the ten-headed monster, Rāvana, the emblem of the ten faculties or organs of sensation and action, and rescued Sītā, that is, obtained union with the divine energy. This is the day of victory (*Vijaya*). On this day disappears the selfish distinction of "mine" and "thine" as a motive of action, and, viewing all things as God and spiritual self, the individual becomes locked in an embrace with all. On the day of victory the blue-throated bird¹ is seen. The self-illuminated sun and moon are the head, the limitless expanse of blue sky is the throat of the Divine Being, who swallows and assimilates the good and evil, enjoyment, and suffering, the poison and nectar of the world. Men want what pleases them, the opposite they shun. But the equal-sighted man (*samadarsi*) accepts both alike, knowing them to be but expressions of himself. Even such a man is called the true conqueror of senses, Hanumān or Mahābir (the Great Hero).

'Relying,' said the sādhu, 'on your great condescension, I venture to ask you for an explanation of the other incidents in the story of Rāma's life.'

'Receive,' said Sivanarayan, 'the true meaning of the words, casting aside all thoughts of glory and disgrace, triumph and defeat, and empty sectarian pride. Rāma or the Supreme Being is omnipresent, all-embracing, and complete. His

¹ *Coracias Indica*.

energy, full of blessedness, creative, preservative, and destructive, is the chaste Sītā, the Mother of all. Lakshman is the discriminating regard for the substance or knowledge of Truth, the true wisdom. The falling off from God owing to forgetfulness of the spiritual and true self is the piercing of Lakshman by the spear of force (*Sakti Sela*). Hanumān, rendered unconscious by Bharat's arrow while repeating the name of Rāma, signifies the last act of egotism by which the discriminating wise man attributes the world to himself, feeling himself to be the conqueror of the senses. To shatter this entralling egotism the Divine Energy transfixes him with the arrow of desires, driving out strength and wisdom. The utterance of Rāma's name with expiring consciousness saves the life of God-devoted wisdom, and induces the Divine Energy to reduce to order the unruly turbulence of sense. Hanumān is himself again, viewing God one with himself, all-embracing, complete. From the formless, attributeless, all-supporting existence as father, and out of the wisdom called Aditi (the Limitless One) proceeds the world-producing, self-illuminated Light. By Him the three regions, above, below, and that between, are made manifest. Lankā, Rāvana's abode, is the world of false knowledge. Wisdom is the arrow of Rāvana's death. When by true devotion the Rākshasas or errors are slain, wisdom arises,

showing all things as God and removing the egotistic assertion of existence, independent of God. From Aditi, the Limitless Wisdom, spring forth gods, from her rival wife, Diti, the Limited or Unwisdom, proceed the giants (Daityas). Penetrate the scriptural allegories and reach their inner meaning. Worship God, whose expression is Light, with faith and devotion. By His gift of wisdom all wrong views will disappear, and you will rest in the profundity of peace.'

After a pause the listeners said: 'My lord, your words are the words of truth. But faith comes from God.'

At Mokameh, on the East Indian Railway line, Sivanarayan lived in a small thatched hut by the side of a large tank, surrounded by gardens. Two Englishmen came fishing in that tank.

'Hindu ascetics,' said one of the sahibs at the end of the day's sport, 'are liars. They work evil to the people by creating a belief in magic and in a multitude of gods.'

'In whom do you believe?' asked Sivanarayan.

'The one God.'

'Where is that one God you believe in? Has any man seen Him? As what is He seen?'

'He is too holy to be seen. The pure in heart alone can see Him.'

'Have you seen Him by attaining purity of heart? Can you show Him to us? How have you come to believe that He is?'

‘We believe because it is so written in the Bible.’

‘On the authority of your Scriptures you believe in one God. The Hindu on the authority of his Scriptures believes in the 330 millions. They, too, are believed to be holy, and unseen of all but the perfectly pure.’

‘Show us one out of so many millions.’

‘Show us the One you worship, or at least one of His attributes or forms.’

‘None can see Him. How can He be shown?’

‘The same thing may be said of the Hindu gods. If one thing is admitted without proof why not as many more as can be desired, and the door opened for all the fables of the world and tales of marvel?’

‘And,’ continued Sivanarayan, ‘the true God of the Hindu, the disposer of all good, OM, the all-comprehending Supreme Being, manifested as Light—the sun and moon—embracing all creatures present, is before you all. From Him all things have proceeded, in Him they stay, and into Him they return. His various expressions, technically called “limbs”; are imagined as the multitude of gods. The individual souls are gods, the senses and faculties are gods, earth, water, fire, air, ākāsa, moon, and sun are all gods. From each god, typifying one particular kind of energy or forming a particular “limb” of God, a definite class of phenomena proceeds. From

the god called Earth proceeds food, flesh, and bones; from Water, drink, blood, and the bodily juices; from Fire, eating, digestion, and utterance; from Air, the breath of life; from Ākāśa, hearing; from the Moon, the affections; from the Sun, judgment, or intelligence and light. If any of these gods be absent or inactive, creatures would perish. The light called the individual, unified with the light called the Sun, rests in the One Cause. The gods of the Hindus are, in the sight of all, engaged in upholding and continuing the life of the world. Where is the One you worship and consider distinct, in form and substance, from these?’

‘If,’ said the sahib, ‘one of our great padres had been here he would have explained these things to you.’

‘Great or small, no man can call into being what is not. Will they create God to show Him to me? He who is manifest can alone be shown. Him, in his formless, attributeless aspect none can see or show. If the followers of the different religions of the world understand the true import of these words, peace will come to all, and goodwill be established in the place of evil.’

Sivanarayan arrived at Gauhati, in Assam, by steamer from Goalundo. The common people of Bengal believe Gauhati or Kāmrup to be the city of enchantment. Women of Kāmrup are supposed to cast their spells on strangers in the

city, turning them into sheep. By magic they are said to transport themselves and others to long distances. Inquiring into the origin of this superstition, Sivanarayan found that in the days previous to steam and electricity many pilgrims to the shrine of Kāmrup fell victims to fatigue, disease, and wild beasts. Others contracted Assamese marriages and forgot their kith and kin, duty, and home. If any returned they brought back traveller's tales as a shield against consciousness of shameful conduct. Truly, prisoners to lust are men turned into sheep.

Some way beyond the town the temple of the goddess Kāmākhyā stands on a hill. Higher up is the temple of Bhubaneswari. No idol or image is to be seen in the former temple. A triangular pit, wide and dark, cut into the rock forming the floor of the temple, is painted red in oils and covered with a piece of cloth of reddish hue. This emblem of creation is shown to pilgrims by the dim light of an earthen lamp. Large gifts to the priests secure for the devout worshipper a piece of the covering cloth as a talisman.

A female figure of stone is the presiding divinity of the temple of Bhubaneswari. Close by is the *āsan* of a Brahamachāri. The wishes of a pilgrim of means, desirous of worshipping the goddess in the flesh, are often gratified by the appearance of a being who, some people

say, is a woman of the town, in appropriate disguise.

The pāndās told Sivanarayan that when the Rajas of Cooch Behar reigned in Assam a golden image, a royal gift, was enshrined in the temple of Kāmākhyā. A pāndā in course of time sold the image, wasting the proceeds in riotous living. The triangular symbol has stood for the image ever since. At the end of the narration Sivanarayan addressed the pāndās, saying: 'Why have you, moved by contemptible selfishness, become a curse to yourselves and others? Misled by false hopes, men are falling away from the true God, and suffering in body, mind, and means. The Supreme Being, really existent and expressed as Light, is everywhere. To find Him one need go nowhere and spend nothing. A sincere heart alone is needed. Abandon this profession which is hurtful to your fellow-man and adopt some innocent mode of living, so that you may be a blessing to yourselves and others.'

'A better profession,' replied the priest, 'does not exist. In all others we have to humble ourselves before someone or other. But in this, the rich and the powerful fall at our feet while supplying us with all we need. Besides, for us, what other profession would be as lucrative as this one?'

Sivanarayan answered him: 'If rulers of men

and possessors of wealth had wisdom, the world would not have suffered as it does. You have, to your own hurt, turned your faces away from the eternal God. A rational being ought to forsake such ways as yours, else he becomes 'an offender against God'.

In a different direction, but not far from Gauhati, Sivanarayan arrived at a place which is believed holy and called Vasistha's *Asram* or Hermitage. The temple on three sides is shut in by hills. A waterfall with noise and tumult leaps down near the temple. A stone image in the cavern within the temple is supposed to be the sage, Vasistha. The sides of the cavern are marked by three similar figures representing the persons of the Hindu trinity. A wooden image outside also goes by the name of Brahmā. The pāndās make pilgrims bathe in the fall of water, which is named the Ganges. The noise of the fall drowns all human voice, a phenomenon attributed by the pāndās to the sanctity of the place which strikes the visitor dumb. The sounds of insect life, heard on the remoter parts of the temple grounds, are fabled to be the music of *apsarās* or celestial dancing-girls attached to the court of the god Indra. The waters of the sacred cascade fall into a dark cavern in the temple and disappear underground, finding an exit elsewhere. The pilgrims are shown the images by lamp-light. This done, they

depart after making the customary payments and offerings.

Travelling and teaching in Assam, Sivanarayan passed through Shillong, Tezpur, Dibrugarh, and Sibsagar. The last-named place contains the shrine of Muktināth, much frequented by pilgrims. A pāndā, taking him for a pilgrim, pressed him hard to visit the shrine.

'What substance,' he asked, 'is the Mukti-nāth that you are pressing me to see? What form does it present to the senses? What comes of seeing Muktināth, and what of not seeing it?'

'Mukti (salvation) and many other benefits result from seeing Muktināth. How can *mukti* come without it?'

'You see and worship Muktināth every day of your life. Is *mukti* yours?'

'Not yet.'

'How can you promise to the pilgrim in a day what after long years you yourselves have not attained? Why for a paltry gain sink with others into the darkness of error? You do not consider who can be truly Muktināth, the Lord of *mukti* or salvation. He who is truth, the pure, intelligence, without beginning or end, the all-comprehending Supreme Being, manifested as Light, is alone *mukti* and Muktināth. He alone can establish the soul in the supreme joy called *mukti*. For this reason Muktināth is one of the

names given to God. None other bearing that name is, was, or can be.'

All who were present heard him with gladness, for he spoke to them many words of truth. The pāndā expressed regret for having offered to show him an image of stone, and craved forgiveness.

According to the guardians of the temple the town derived its name from Sib Sinha, a former Raja of Cooch Behar. His brother built the temple, establishing therein a stone image of Siva under the name of Muktināth. This is shown to pilgrims for a small fee. Sivanarayan explained to them that all temples, images, and holy places, wherever situated, are the outcome of man's imagination. Wandering in quest of these the weary pilgrim reaps as reward only poverty and suffering.

Sivanarayan found himself at Gaya. An ancient banyan close by is called the *Akshay Bata* or 'Eternal Banyan'. A Gayāli or pāndā of Gaya was pressing Sivanarayan to perform the customary ceremonies for the benefit of his ancestors' souls. The celebration at Gaya of these ceremonies ensures the instant ascension to heaven of the pious celebrant's ancestors. Sivanarayan addressed him, saying: 'Into what woeful error have you fallen? You are worshipping a piece of metal fashioned like a human foot, calling it Vishnupāda.¹ By your advice

¹ i.e. the feet of the omnipresent god Vishnu.

others are worshipping the same, to their own impoverishment. As the reward of such devotions your greed and their sufferings are ever on the increase. Spiritual blindness has turned your hearts away from the true God. The Vedas clearly teach that the true feet of Vishnu or God are the earth from which you draw your sustenance and derive your flesh and bones. This common banyan-tree, which you call undying, a spark of fire can reduce to ashes before your very eyes. This universe of forms is the banyan-tree, truly undying. But you do not cast a glance at the light which is its root. If with love and devotion you worship the all-comprehending Light—of whom the sun and moon are expressions—you will see the true banyan-tree in its true form; in other words, you will see the universe one with yourselves and God. The Light is the seed from which the world grows. What is, is in Light. The devotee sees in the form of Light called the moon the true banyan-tree, which is not different from the reality you call the moon. You worship mere forms, things that exist only as the figments of your mind. You suffer because you have fallen away from the true God. The pāndās at Allahabad, for their own gain, have set up an undying banyan-tree, the same as you, with the same result. Even now come together all of you in love, and put an end to every such thing of deceit; even now

take refuge in Him who really is, and He will, out of His own goodness, secure the good of all'.

'Consider,' said the Gayāli, 'the sanctity of the place. We can give *mukti* or salvation to the ancestors of every one who comes here and makes the requisite offering.'

'The all-comprehending Supreme Being, the world's Parent, Teacher, and Soul, is the world's one saviour or *mukti*-giver. How can you give *mukti*?'

'You must have seen how we bind a man's hands with one garland of flowers and strike him with another. When the required fee is paid we set him free, and in the act give *mukti* to his ancestors.'

'Is that so? In bondage to desire yourselves, how can you remove that bondage from another? Can one tied securely to a post help another in similar plight? By merciless religious tyranny you are extorting money from pilgrims and giving their ancestors *mukti* by mere word of mouth. Shame on you who deceive, and shame on those who are deceived into the belief that salvation can be bought with money! There is no other saviour beside the all-comprehending Supreme Being, nor was, nor can be. He holds in His hands the power of waking creatures into activity, making them dream dreams, and putting them into dreamless sleep. He alone can plunge us into ignorance, can give formal knowledge

and real experience. Of this doubt there is none. Seek refuge in Him, and in mercy He will keep you in the supreme joy of *mukti*.'

To a pāndā at Mathura Sivanarayan said: 'None considers the end to which God has given wealth and power to man. Proper use of them has become impossible in consequence. The rich, with lavish expenditure, build temples and consecrate images. The pāndās by deceit and falsehood turn them into sources of gain. Pilgrims undergo misery and oppression in the hope of rewards that cannot come. None sees that God is not the author of these things. Wealth and power are given to the individual that many may rejoice thereat. To act only for oneself is to offend in God's sight and reap the rebel's reward. This is true beyond doubt or cavil'.

CONCLUSION

A few incidents in Sivanarayan's life at Calcutta and its neighbourhood are collected here.

TRANSPLANTING A CALENDULA

IN the garden where he occupies a hut Sivanarayan was transplanting a calendula shrub from the shade of a mango-tree. Some gentlemen and two Brahmachāris, in brown robes, came to see him. After salutations Sivanarayan asked them to wait until his work was finished. Seeing him so busy, one of the visitors remarked: 'We come to see a sense-conquering Mahātmā, but we find him engaged in work, showing his attachment to a worldly object. Had he been free from desire and attachment he would not have troubled himself about a calendula shrub. In bondage himself how can he help us?'

His work finished, Sivanarayan asked them about the object of their visit.

'We have come to see you. People say you are a great Mahātmā,' was the answer.

'What is it,' said Sivanarayan, 'that you call a Mahātmā? What substance is it? Is it formless and attributeless, or is it otherwise? If it is formless and without attributes, it cannot be

sensed. How can you see it with the eyes of flesh? But the all-comprehending Being, embracing your bodies, senses, and faculties, is present everywhere. To see Him it is not necessary to go to any particular place. What is the great Mahātmā? If it be this form of flesh and bones, all creatures are He; if the individual soul, which is of divine substance, then all individuals are He. If great Mahātmā be but the name of a state or condition, then you will find on reflection that states or conditions are three, namely, ignorance, knowledge of truth, and truth itself. All creatures are born in ignorance. If that state be great Mahātmā, then, too, all creatures are He. If Knowledge, then the one God, including in Himself all things, moving and stationary, is the true knowledge. If Truth itself, then mark this: To Truth itself names such as Supreme Being, soul, attributed or attributeless, all-comprehending, cannot be applied. It or He is what It or He is. He is neither great nor small. In quest of Him no place has to be visited. Who or what have you then come to see as the great Mahātmā? If you say, being in Ignorance, you have come to see Knowledge as the great Mahātmā, then tell me how can Ignorance test Knowledge? The dreamer knows not the condition of one awake nor the condition of one unconscious. In what condition do you think you are yourselves, and

in what condition do you think am I, the man you have come to see, as a great Mahātmā?"

"We do not know. Deign to instruct us."

"First, free your minds from the shock you received on coming here. We shall talk of other things afterwards."

"We have received no shock."

"Be not ashamed. Express your feelings without reserve. Your feelings are but natural."

Thus encouraged they frankly told of the shock they had received on seeing Sivanarayan transplanting the calendula shrub.

"What think you of God?" asked Sivanarayan.

"He is one, second to none, omnipotent, all-comprehending, complete, and Creator of all. There is nothing better or higher than He," was the reply.

"That is so," said Sivanarayan. "What thing is there better or higher than He, for desiring the world He has created it, and attached to which He is ceaselessly working for its continued existence! Seeing me transplant a shrub you feel shocked, but if you thus consider the ways of God your perplexity will decrease and turn your light into darkness. You have seen me transplanting a shrub, but truly I have done nothing. You can see that I did not create the bodily limbs by which the work was done, nor has the earth, water, or seed of the shrub proceeded from me. What is, is. All these have

come from God, and are, indeed, His expressions, in no way separate from Him. Nothing can transcend Him. Then what did I see separate from Him to which I became attached by Desire when I transplanted the tree? As the exertions experienced in dreams disappear, and their results melt with them on rising from sleep, so awakening in wisdom you perceive the truth concerning the desires and attachments which you feel in ignorance. God Himself, supremely detached, works with infinite energy for the world. The man of wisdom, free from attachment, ceaselessly labours to teach others selflessly to work for the world's good. Prompted by ignorance and indolence you have dyed your robes so as to find excuse for believing yourselves detached. And yet, willing or unwilling, your senses and organs are doing their appropriate work, eating, drinking, and so on. By God's mercy alone can you rise above the bondage of Sense. Sense-conquest is but a power or attribute of God. Why through deceitful ceremonies invented by man do you become a cause for suffering to yourselves and others? If you find His mercy, your ignorance will depart, and peace will descend on you. The wise man, a lion amongst men, in the midst of all actions of life and experiencing all objects of sense, remains detached and in the enjoyment of the supreme joy of *mukti*. Each man according to his own nature judges the condition of the

wise. Those wrapped up in ignorance cannot understand the motives of the wise. They attribute to the wise the selfishness that prompts their own acts. To attribute to another the motives which actuate one's own conduct is natural to man. I will tell you an anecdote to illustrate all this. If you understand its true purport your errors will be removed. Listen:— A saint was lying down by the side of a high road. Of three travellers who passed him, one remarked: "This man is resting after a whole night's thieving". Another disagreed and said: "He is sleeping off the effects of a drunken debauch". The third traveller attributed his state to a love intrigue. The holy man, who was giving his body a short rest after exhausting labours for the good of others, addressed them, saying: "All of you are right". Asking for an explanation of how three different statements could be correct, they were told this: "Each of you has attributed to me his own nature. I have no fault to find. By God's law your natural characteristics are showing themselves in your speech. You see in others what you are yourselves".

'These,' said one of the Brahmachāris, 'are words of the path of knowledge.'

'Do you want to hear words of unwisdom? The wise man knows that, although all creatures are expressions of the Deity, wisdom must be sought from the wise, and thieving from a thief.'

For cure of illness you must repair to a physician, and for wisdom and *mukti* you must seek refuge in the all-comprehending Supreme Being, manifested as Light, who is truly the world's parent, teacher, and soul, seeking refuge by loving prayer and invocation through repeating mentally His name OM.'

'You believe in Mother Kāli?' asked the Brahamachāri.

'He who is,' said Sivanarayan, 'continues to be, whether you believe or disbelieve. He who is not, cannot be, whether you believe or not. The earth that you see does not exist just because somebody believes in its existence. Nor will it cease to be if everybody denies its existence. The asserter and the denier of its existence will have equally to dwell on it and draw sustenance therefrom. If Mother Kāli, the all-comprehending Supreme Being, by her own nature exists, my belief or disbelief does not affect her existence. If, on the other hand, existence be not her nature, what does it matter if by word of mouth I confess her existence? You can directly perceive that the all-comprehending Supreme Being, including in Himself all that moves and all that moves not, is One, infinite and indivisible. If Mother Kāli is one of the names of this Being I cannot but believe in her. If she is held to be something different, where is she? Show me her existence.'

They heard with their ears, not with their understanding. In silence they bowed, and went away.

CASTE WITHOUT FEAST

Sivanarayan had a sick visitor in his hut. At his request Rām Bhajan nursed him. On the recovery of the visitor after a long and severe illness Rām Bhajan left with a trifling reward. His castemen decided he had suffered loss of caste by tending a sick man, and that he could only be restored to it by providing a sumptuous caste feast. Rām Bhajan was extremely poor and with difficulty earned his daily bread. Finding the expense beyond his means Rām Bhajan returned to Sivanarayan and, with tears, laid the whole case before him. Sivanarayan consoled him, saying the requisite expense would somehow be met, telling him to go back to his caste-fellows and arrange with them that at the end of the feast they should show him where his caste had gone and give it back to him, or return to him the cost of the feast. The advice was followed, and Rām Bhajan was questioned as to whose authority he was obeying. When all had been told, the guardians of caste purity remained silent. Rām Bhajan got back his caste without a feast.

THE STICK AS AN EXEGETIST

Late one night a boisterous company which had feasted not wisely but too well, collected before Sivanarayan's hut, shouting: 'Ho! param-hansa, come outside. We want to have a scriptural argument with you'. Sivanarayan came out to them. His lack of conventional clothing excited their derision.

He tried to quieten them, and inquired what sort of scriptural argument they desired. Without answering they kept on shouting: 'We will have a scriptural argument'. After giving much good counsel Sivanarayan told them to go home, as it was not safe for them to be out at such an hour. They continued shouting. Sivanarayan picked up a wooden post, crying: 'Wisdom cures ignorance and a cudgel wickedness'.

'What is the stick for?'

'To answer your scriptural question. Without this stick none can dispute with you.'

'Are you going to strike us?'

'Not if you go away quietly.'

'Let's see how you can strike,' shouted the midnight crew.

Sivanarayan twirled the stick over his head, crying: 'To each end there is an appropriate means. If you don't leave I shall break your bones.'

‘Murder! Murder!’ they shouted, and scampered off.

HOLY MAHĀTMĀS

A pundit, whose face reflected the peace within, addressed Sivanarayan, saying: ‘Men say holy Mahātmās dwell in forests, avoiding the habitations of men. If this be true, wisdom and *mukti* must indeed be hard for householders to attain, owing to lack of instructors’.

‘Reflect well,’ said Sivanarayan; ‘to him who is a true Mahātmā, in whom resides the perception of what things are in reality, what difference can there be between the solitary forest and the populous city? For him it would be more natural to be in a town than in a wilderness. Dwelling in some inaccessible place, of what use will he be to mankind? In the haunts of men his precept and example will be for the world’s good. A selfish end is impossible in his purity. Good of others can alone furnish him with a motive for action. Will a Mahātmā then uselessly bear the burden of this body in a forest, and not strive to impart to others his own joyous blessedness? When discriminative knowledge first sprouts, when love of the truth puts forth its tender shoots, there may be a need for lonely solitude, free from temptations, so that the mind may not fall away from the truth. But

why should a true Mahātmā, be he a sannyāsi or a householder, who has seen God or the true self as the visible and invisible, all-comprehending, one and indivisible, whose mind and senses are subdued and detached, prefer a forest? He will dwell where he chooses, no injunction or restriction governing him. If he experiences all the experiences of the world he experiences nothing separate from himself. Perceiving the real nature of suffering and enjoyment he becomes attached to nothing. As the suffering and enjoyment of dream life is seen, on awaking, to be one with the Self, so are the suffering and enjoyment of the life of ignorance, seen in the condition of wisdom or enlightenment, in no way separate from the experiencer. All things are seen by the wise to be God or the Self. That such a one avoids the habitations of men is a vain fancy of the unenlightened. If all such beings abandon men, then who by words, written and spoken, will keep the way of wisdom open?’

‘True,’ said the pundit, ‘but at a friend’s house I met a man, believed to have been perfected by his austerities and devotions, who refused to sit down to a meal until a woman’s portrait which happened to be in the room was placed with its face to the wall. But for this he would have left the house.’

‘You are,’ said Sivanarayan, ‘well versed in the Scriptures. Where have you read that

looking on a woman is prohibited to a perfect man? Those unable to withstand the unruly impulses of sense avoid women for fear of consequences. The perfect man you spoke about had not attained to the Reality, nor experienced the true substance. He was strongly attached to this doll, made of flesh and filth. He accepted himself as a man, the picture as a woman, and her as an object of enjoyment. He felt not that the male and the female body, their senses and organs, were of exactly the same substance. He did not perceive that he himself was but pure intelligence and one with God in reality, that neither the male nor the female were really separate from God. If any knowledge of Reality had been his, he would not have viewed the female figure as different from himself or asked it to be turned round. This is the truth, without doubt or uncertainty. Whoso hath perception of the true substance hath wisdom, and the wise alone have peace. So long as the male and the female are seen as separate from one another and from God, they are felt to be related together as the enjoyer and the enjoyed. In that condition the fickle senses generate attachment. After the condition of reality (Swarupa) is reached, a man or a woman feels no such attachment, though surrounded by thousands of the opposite sex. By such a one all things are seen in, and as God.'

THE BUDDHIST PUNAR

Sivanarayan found himself in the audience of a Buddhist preacher. 'To establish the fickle mind,' the preacher said, 'is easy. Reality or substance has two aspects, formless (Nirākāra) and having forms (Sākāra). The Nirākāra transcends the mind, the mind cannot hold it. Therefore even to attempt it is useless. The Sākāra is perceptible and within the mental grasp of all. But it is unreal. No good can come of applying the mind to it. The mind, therefore, need not move at all. Thus, without scriptural study, devotions, or austerities, the mind has become free from movements.' The listeners looked at one another and at the preacher in silence.

After an interval Sivanarayan was asked to speak. He said that if the minds of those present had lost their fickle movements in consequence of what was said, no words from him were necessary. Being assured that such had not happened, he continued: 'Cast aside all thoughts of glory and disgrace, triumph and defeat, and collective and individual selfishness that leads to nothing, and with discrimination search after the substance of reality. From the perception of the reality comes wisdom, and from wisdom comes peace. The reality has no more than two aspects, Sākāra or Nirākāra. Is the

expounder himself Sākāra or Nirākāra? If the former, he transcends the mind and the senses. Perception, exposition, action cannot be in him, for they are not present in dreamless sleep. But the agent of the act of exposition is perceptible to the senses, and must, then, be Sākāra, and therefore unreal. Words proceeding from what is unreal can be accepted or rejected with equal profit'.

'I, the expounder,' struck in the preacher, 'am the breath of life. The breath is expounding the truth.'

'All here present,' rejoined Sivanarayan, 'receive the truth with sobriety of understanding and peace at heart. If fire be present its attributes of burning or luminosity must also be present. When the fire disappears, with it disappear its attributes. If the expounding life-breath be present its attribute of intelligence, which is involved in the act of expounding, must also be present. But you all can see that in dreamless sleep the breath runs its usual course, though intelligence or discrimination is absent. What is it the absence of which causes the absence of intelligence in dreamless sleep? If intelligence had been an attribute of breath it would have been active in dreamless sleep. Consider, now, to what is due the intelligence whose action you see in the condition called waking. Of what is intelligence the attribute?'

'What am I to say,' said the preacher, 'to one in whom the truth is fully manifested?'

'O men,' said Sivanarayan, 'seek refuge, without pride, in God, manifested as Light, in and out. He will move your hearts to the truth. So long as this light is active in your heads, eyes, and ears you are possessed of intelligence; when the Divine manifestation, called the sun, withdraws that light into the cause, you fall into dreamless sleep and perception disappears. In that condition, breath continues its work of circulating the blood to prevent putrefaction of the body. Receive the truth and abide in joy.'

THE RAJA

A Raja brought Sivanarayan to his palace with much honour. After salutations the Raja said: 'If God there be, my lord, show Him unto me'. Sivanarayan answered him, saying: 'Seeing is the work of the eye. Men have imagined three kinds of eyes—the eye of the flesh, the eye of knowledge, and the eye of the spirit. Of these, man cannot control even one. Without light the eye of the flesh cannot see. Without the union of light, which is the intelligent part of all external existence, with the luminosity of consciousness within, there is no perception. When, by the grace of the Supreme Being, the Supreme Soul will be revealed as one with the individual

soul, you will see the individual or yourself in identity with the Supreme Soul, God; or, as the cause or substance, the subtle or conscious force, the gross or matter. This is the eye of the spirit'.

'True,' said the Raja, 'but God is all-comprehending, all-powerful, self-manifest. Then why does He not of Himself show Himself to us?'

'If,' said Sivanarayan, pointing to a pundit who was at that moment receiving harsh treatment from the servants at the Raja's gate, 'if you would consider the difference in your treatment of myself, whom at some pains you have brought from a hut to a palace, and of that man who, to gain a few rupees, daily seeks and is daily refused admittance to your presence, you will find the true solution of your problem.'

'That man,' said the Raja, 'has no other object in trying to see me save to force from me a small gift. He belongs to such a large class that it is beyond my power to satisfy all of them. It is for this reason that he is kept out. But you are a Mahātmā, wearing a body only for the world's good. The house you visit is sanctified by your presence.'

'It comes, then, to this: you keep him at a distance because he has selfish ends to serve; you associate with me gladly because you think I have no such ends in view. You have hidden yourself from him; and in the same way God hides Himself from those who seek Him with a

selfish desire. But to the same man He reveals Himself when he sheds those desires. He is self-manifest.'

'You speak the words of truth. But looking at myself I feel that without God's grace, all purity of mind or desirelessness is unattainable by man's own exertions.'

'True,' said Sivanarayan, 'if God's commandments are kept even at the prompting of desire, by His grace desirelessness comes in time. But no good comes to one who remains inactive because he thinks it is not good to worship God with a selfish desire.'

THE HINDU AND THE ENGLISHMAN

A pundit, who was a firm believer in Hindu rites, ceremonies, and institutions, gently remonstrated with Sivanarayan on his practice of giving to Englishmen the sacred name OM and allowing them to make offerings in the fire.

'What of that?' said Sivanarayan: 'Englishman is only a name imagined by man. But what is the substance of which this is a name? Apart from the self-manifest Eternal Being, who includes in Himself the moving and the stationary, what and where is any substance called the "Englishman"? As you are a combination of the "seven limbs of God" so is the Englishman. What is not in the Englishman is not in you.'

By what substance am I to accept you and reject the Englishman?

'The substance is the same, no doubt, but qualities are different. The Englishman is constantly killing creatures; neither mercy nor tenderness are in his heart.'

'The qualities that God puts into an individual are active in him. Condemn no one. All creatures are parts, images, or children of God. All creatures must therefore be equally treated with mercy. It is unworthy of a rational man to cut the throat of another's child for his own child's good. Look at the number of animals slaughtered in Mother Kāli's name. The blood and bones go to the earth, the flesh is eaten by the worshippers, the skin is used for making drum-heads. What does Mother Kāli eat? How many finny creatures go to furnish the Hindu's daily meal? How can you, then, hold the Moslems and Christians guilty and the Hindus innocent of taking life? God looks impartially on all. For the same act He will not condemn one and justify another. He will pardon or punish all equally. But let that pass. Listen to the narration of something I have witnessed at different times in different places. If you carefully consider these incidents, casting aside all thoughts of glory and disgrace, triumph and defeat and social selfishness, your errors will be removed.'

I

'Rajputana suffers from a permanent scarcity of water. In places it is impossible to sink a well or excavate a tank, even at great expense. Hindus, desirous of religious merit, keep a supply of water in proper receptacles by the roadside. A Brahmin is paid for the care and distribution of the water.'

'At midday a donkey was carrying a heavy load. It was in the territories of the Maharaja of Jeypore. The donkey, thirsty and tired, was gladdened by the sight of water on the roadside, and attempted to drink. The animal was too stupid to understand that the water was not intended for all living things needing it, but was reserved for the benefit of cows, so that the giver might acquire merit. He put his head into the trough, but almost immediately fell dead in the middle of the road under the blows of the Brahmin, who in great exultation exclaimed: "You rogue! Is a donkey to drink the water meant for cows?"'

"Of what caste are you?" the Brahmin asked on my begging a drink of water.

"Very low caste," said I.

"My drinking pot will be spoiled if I let you use it. Bring out your own drinking vessel, and it shall be dipped into the hollow of this block of stone."

“I have no drinking vessel.”

“Then be off.”

“Men,” I said, “have so completely turned away from God and grown so dull of understanding that they will not give a drink of water to a sentient being who is visible Siva, yet will, nevertheless, in the name of Siva bring water from distant Rāmeswaram or Benares to pour it on a block of stone. They see not that the stone, devoid of sense and organs, can have no use for it.”

II

‘A milkman was driving a cow by the side of Chowringi Road towards Kalighat. To prevent the animal from straying, the rope round its neck was tied to one of its forelegs. How painful any kind of movement was to the animal in this condition the man never considered. An Englishman came riding from the opposite direction. He took pity on the poor cow, and forced its owner, with the help of a whip, to untie the foreleg, and threatened him with further punishment unless he led the cow by the neck. The milkman obeyed the precept of the mighty *guru*—the whip—craving forgiveness.’

III

‘A dog, with a festering sore on its head, so that he could not hold it straight, was passing

along Dhurrumtollah Street. In whichever direction he went he was driven away by the passers-by. Some merciful Englishmen took pity on him, washed the sore, and applied medicaments. Then they gave him in charge of a servant, with directions to treat the sore and take care of the animal until there was complete recovery.'

IV

'Among the passengers of a Kalighat horse-car were two Englishmen. The benches were full. Two ladies stopped the car to get in. Before the conductor could send them away, the two Englishmen respectfully gave up their seats to the ladies and stood at the back by the conductor's side. After these four had stepped out, three women, one English and two Indian, attempted to get in. There was room then for three or four more passengers. But wherever they went for seats the other passengers spread themselves out, or put their umbrellas on the bench, and prevented them from sitting down. They courteously requested accommodation, which none granted. The English lady sat down, pushing her neighbour aside, and advised the others to do likewise, but they were too confused to profit by the example. The passengers, in their own tongue, spoke of the lady in an indecent and insulting manner. She happened

to understand them. "You are cowards," she exclaimed, "unmanly savages to insult me. How would you like such language to be used to your own mothers and sisters? If you preserve the honour and dignity of other people's mothers and sisters God will preserve your own from indignity and dishonour." But they were unmoved. The lady shouted to the police for assistance. I left wondering at God's mercy, which could save even men like these.'

V

'A carter, wearing the holy thread, had laden his cart so heavily that after proceeding a short distance one of the bullocks broke down completely. The carter in vain urged the poor creature forward with cruel torture. "Why," asked an Englishman, who happened to arrive on the spot, "do you needlessly ill-treat your animal?"'

"It won't move on otherwise."

The Englishman unyoked the bullock, and, putting the carter in its place, with blows bade him draw the cart. Unable to move under the weight he piteously cried to be let off.

"You are a Hindu. These animals, you say, are your gods. Consider how you are treating them. When you feel pain you can call out for relief. But these dumb creatures are unable to

tell us about even the intensest pain. Hence it is man's duty, through foresight, to prevent their suffering. God has given man dominion over other creatures. By an unjust treatment of them, man becomes answerable to God. To work them according to their different capacities, in obedience to God's commandments, is acceptable to Him. By what gives you pleasure and pain, measure to others. My ill-treatment of you was intended to teach you this lesson.””

‘My lord,’ said the pundit at the end of the discourse, ‘is there no fault in the Englishman's character?’

‘I don't say that good and base qualities are not to be found in all persons. But if men disregarded the evil in others, and encouraged one another in righteousness, God would hide away all evil and maintain every one in joy, establishing goodness as supreme on this earth. Of, this there is no doubt.’

ARE YOU AN INCARNATION OF GOD?

This inquiry was addressed to Sivanarayan by some young men from a village not far from Calcutta. The subjoined letter contains his answer:

Hold your hearts steadfast in the all-comprehending Supreme Being, manifested as Light, within and without

—the parent, teacher, and soul. With peace at heart and sobriety of understanding fulfil your temporal and spiritual duties, so that in all things you and all belonging to you may rest as joy in the joy supreme. Be contented with little, and active in doing others good, so that the world's good may be accomplished. In the world's good is your own, and in yours the world's. For the world is filled with your soul and God. Be zealous in the performance of both kinds of duty—temporal and spiritual. Be lukewarm in nothing. What is lukewarmly done is never done well.

Having duly received your letter I have become acquainted with the contents thereof. Fear not. Be anxious about nothing. Fix your thoughts on the Ruler of hearts. He is full of goodness and will do good.

You have inquired about Divine incarnation. Reflect. What is naught *is* not. And it is naught *is* not to everybody. What is naught is not in the visible or invisible. The Being or Truth is but one. The truth is truth to all. The truth is and never can be naught. The truth is self-existent, formless, yet possessed of forms, the manifest and the unmanifest, the visible and the invisible. In other words, comprehending in Himself the cause or substance, the subtle or Life, and the gross or matter, He is infinite, indivisible. Beside Him no other is, was, will, or can be. To Him are applied two classes of attributes, indicative of aspects, namely: formless, attributeless, beyond mind and speech, transcending knowledge. This is one class. The other class is possessed of forms and attributes, manifest, perceptible, visible, and consisting of earth, water, fire, air, ākāsa, the moon and sun—Light. These last are called in the Scriptures of this country the 'limbs' of the all-comprehending Being, the Powers (Sakti), and gods and goddesses, and by many other names. From Him proceed all things,

moving and stationary, the female and male, Pirs, Paigambers, Auliyas, Rishis, Munis, Christ, and all other incarnations; by Him they continue in existence, and into Him they enter in the end. He is omnipotent. In all ages even He, in the form of incarnations, accomplishes the world's salvation. Few know Him or honour Him. Hence the world suffers. If refuge is sought in Him, craving His forgiveness, and what pleases Him is done with discrimination, He will work the good of all. For He is full of goodness. He manifests Himself in one physical body and takes away the world's burden. If such be His will He can by internal prompting save the world through the smallest ant. Separated from Him I have no power by which the meanest thing can be done. When His work is done He will be known.

SUMMING UP

'Tell me, sir,' said a busy lawyer, whose English education had taken away his reverence for the religious forms of his country, 'briefly and in plain intelligible language, the substance of your teaching.'

'Free from thoughts of self, attend to these words and understand their true meaning.

'In love worship God, who is formless and attributeless and yet who is, and is possessed of all the forms and attributes, who is gross or physical, and subtle or living existence, and the cause or substance of all, who is all that moves and all that moves not, who is the one,

all-comprehending Being, whose most striking expression is the light men call the sun and moon.

'Confronted by the sun and moon, bow down to Him, the author of all good, uniting yourself to His all-comprehending completeness.

'Let each one out of his worldly possessions feed God in His form, with things that please the taste and smell, and fulfil, to the extent of each one's power, the needs of all His creatures.

'Endeavour always to keep the mind, body, earth, water, and air pure and clean.

'Thus acting, man will be happy now and for ever. Nothing more is required. Too many ceremonies vex the soul and weary the body. In them there is no good.'

'Are you,' questioned the educated Hindu, 'a worshipper of the sun, moon, and fire?'

'In answer,' said Sivanarayan, 'I can only pray to the God who really *is*.

'O Thou all-comprehending Complete Being, Thou art our Father in Thy formless, attributeless, transcendent aspect, and in the opposite aspect Thou art even our Mother. Hidden to our mind and senses, and yet, possessed of all powers and glory, Thou art present before us all and prominently as the Light. In these different aspects Thou art indivisible, secondless, the source of all Love, and the ordainer of all good, temporal and spiritual. But Thy ungrateful creatures, imagining a conflict

between Thy aspects, are working woe unto themselves.

‘O Thou Complete One, Thou art complete in expression, inclusive of the formless substance, and complete in substance, inclusive of the forms or expressions, and self-existent for ever and ever. Thy creatures, in blindness of spirit, are unable to receive Thee in Thy completeness. If they are called on to receive Thee, Complete One, by the help of Thy expression called Light, which is Thy glory and power, Thy very self as the Lord Supreme, they spurn the instruction in their blindness, as teaching the worship of inanimate matter, of a finite thing. May their sins be forgiven!

‘OM Santih. The peace of God be with you all.’

PART II
TEACHINGS

TEACHINGS

THE following extracts from the published teachings of Sivanarayan are translated faithfully, but not literally, from the original Bengali. They are arranged according to the natural gradation of feeling and thought.

I. GENERAL

SALUTATION UNTO THE SUPREME SPIRIT

The Pure Spirit, the plenitude of being, formless, modeless, attributeless, stainless, effortless, fathomless, boundless, unattainable, transcending change, uncontainning, exhaustless, all-comprehending, ruler of hearts, ineffable, without particularity, the supreme teacher, the parent of these passing things—from whom the passing things proceed, in whom they rest and into whom they re-enter, leaving no trace behind; whose mere expressions they are—even unto the same supreme Brahama, all creatures' goal, I render salutation.—*Paramakalyāna Gitā*.

VISION OF HIM IN NAME AND FORM

Of Him an expression is this universe of the moving and the moveless, the male and the

female. His universe-form, the Vedas sing, has the sun for eye and the moon for mind. These words are a veil (or allegory). These two are His eye and mind and yet they are not. Reflection shows these two to be the chief workers of world-life. Visioned thus, taking the spirit and form as one, they are called and received as the Supreme Spirit.—*Paramakalyāna Gītā*.

To Him who, comprehending in Himself the universe, seen and unseen, with its sustaining substance, the totality of power, attribute and action, formless and indivisible, even in thought, is plenitude of being, eternal, self-existent, without beginning, end, or aught between; who, having in Himself infinitude of powers, names, attributes, the right and wrong impressions and true vision, the sentient and insentient, is, yet, beyond them all, even unto Him a name is given and that name is OM.—*Amrita Sāgara*.

WORSHIP WITH AND WITHOUT FORM RECONCILED

Holding the mind fast on the indescribable Supreme Being (indicated above), He may, without harm, be worshipped associated with form or dissociated therefrom. Form and its absence are His aspects as effect and cause. He, whose aspects they are, is existence itself. Hence difference of aspects affects not Him whose

aspects they are. Division in the eternal is nowise possible.—*Paramakalyāna Gitā*

QUALITIES PROMOTIVE OF DEVOTION

In the sincere, gentle, humble, merciful, faithful to truth, just, regardful of the well-being of all, male and female, accepted as expressions of the individual soul and God, the Divine power or Divinity manifests itself. For none by these are hurt.—*Sāra Nitya Kriyā*.

Devotional spirit grows not but in love.—*Amrita Sāgara*.

WORSHIP OF EXALTED INDIVIDUALS

Shall the seeker for salvation worship incarnation, saint or sage? The truth will enlighten him alone who casts aside all prepossessions, social and sectarian. God may be figured as water. Of this water the exalted ones are bubbles, uncommonly large, while ordinary mortals are but froth. Water can turn all bubbles into water and not merely water into bubbles, however exalted in created sight. Those who by the grace of God can approach any exalted being, while in the flesh, must serve, obey and receive his teaching with reverential love. But when he leaves the flesh to rest in God, his individuality is unsearchable and no individual worship can

be directed to him. Worship God alone and all that can be worshipped are worshipped thereby.
—*Sāra Nitya Kriyā*.

RANK AND HONOURS

Men set their hearts on worldly rank and honours. They turn not their minds towards Him from whom the world's well-being proceeds. Individuals, issuing from Him, are held by some and denied by others to be entitled to Divine honours, under the name of incarnation, saint or sage. If what is due to the eternal alone is given to one, who appears and disappears in Time, suffering falls on the world. The Unwise value what is near and disregard the One, beyond change, while Wisdom commands honour to Him alone. But the wise are few, and true honour is rarely rendered to God.

Men, fall not away from the truth by hungering after rank and honours! Establish your thoughts on the all-comprehending Supreme Spirit, represented as Light, and so serve others that they, freed from hatred and malice, may find Him, who is the true Parent of all. Turn not away from Him to become the source of suffering for all. Seek refuge in Him and find unending joy. He alone is worthy of supreme worship and adoration. Of individuals, he who sees God in all, and all in God, and receives others

as an expression—a multiplication—of himself, is the highest and best among creatures, whatever his birth and whatever his sex.—*Amrita Sāgara*.

PRACTICAL DEVOTION

Men, casting away all thoughts of glory and disgrace, triumph and defeat, social and sectarian pride, receive these words in truth. Thus will your well-being, temporal and spiritual, be secured for ever. Of this doubt there is none.

(1) Keep all things, not *ceremoniously*, but *really* pure and clean.

(2) Labour for the fulfilment of God-given needs, and not for mere fancies and desires, of His creatures.

(3) With reverence fragrant and sweet, make offerings in the fire of life, reflecting upon the beneficial influence of the act on health of body and mind and on the marvellous way in which God maintains the life of the world and the civilization of mankind by the agency of fire.

(4) In the confidence of Love call on Him by the name OM which, having no popular meaning, will be conducive to true unity of hearts among the worshippers.

(5) Feel His visible presence in what men call the Sun and the Moon. Receive the light with the eye, and in reverential love bow down to Him they represent to sight.

(6) Be devoted to all the all-comprehending Supreme Spirit. While feeling His presence in His works forget not his all-comprehending plenitude of being.—*Paramakalyāna Gitā*.

DEVOTION IN ASSOCIATED EXISTENCE

Perform your duties, temporal and spiritual, with gentle, sober discrimination. Let all your doings be calculated to help all connected with you to attain eternal bliss. Work with a contented heart. Let each one work for the good of all. For in that good is the good of every *one*. For a man who discovers his true well-being there is goodness everywhere. Everything that is represents God and soul. In all things work with zeal. Be slothful in nothing. For sloth destroys all goodness.—*Sāra Nitya Kriyā*.

He who confesses God by word of mouth but obeys not His commandments is an unbeliever. He who confesses not in words but feels as his own others' well-being and its opposite, and whose conduct is ruled by that feeling, is truly a believer, whatever else he may or may not be. He who, disregardful of the purpose of creation, worships Him with external pomp and ceremony but feels no love for His creatures and shows them no mercy, is an unbeliever, though endowed with all other good qualities. While he who labours for the world's good, is

a man of true faith. Without cherishing His creatures in love all forms of worship are valueless. On doing works acceptable to Him, He cleanses the heart with true wisdom and establishes the doer in the Supreme Bliss called Nirvana. Whoever does such works, even without uttering His name, becomes pure in heart, and rests in the Supreme Bliss which is differently called Mukti, Nirvana, or Salvation.—*Anrita Sāgara*.

INTELLECTUAL LOVE OF GOD

Let all human beings, high and low, male and female, ask themselves these questions and seek for answers thereto: 'Who am I, whence do I come, whither proceeding? What and who is He I worship? How am I to gain temporal and spiritual well-being for me and mine?' Let all human beings, young and old, male and female, pray with all humility thus: 'O supreme all-comprehending Being, whose visible presence is Light, without and within, our Master, Parent, an dinnermost Essence, we, engrossed in worldly pursuits, forget Thee. But in Thine own goodness forget us not, and forgive our offending. O Ruler of hearts, move our hearts to perpetual remembrance of Thee!—*Paramakalyāna Gitā*.

HOUSEHOLDER AND ASCETIC

The householder's state is the best. He is qualified for all goodness, temporal and spiritual. In the performance of his duties if he but once turns to God in prayer his sins are forgiven and he rests in unending bliss. The professed ascetic, with many repeated prayers but cherishing in his heart a single self-regarding desire, is left far behind; but the householder serves God in things of life and of the spirit. Orderly life is a part of the Divine scheme; while the ascetic life is barren of spiritual value if touched by a single desire for carnal enjoyment which makes him a stranger to peace.—*Ibid.*

PRAYER FOR RELIGION, UNITY, AND PEACE

O Thou self-existent, all-comprehending Supreme Spirit, the light of eye and heart, be in peace and bestow peace on the world. Or, since Thou art peace itself, grant peace unto all Thy creatures. Purify their hearts and give them the wisdom to understand that Thou art all-comprehending, making clear Thy commandment to Thy creatures so that each can look on others as expressions of himself and Thee, and thus, freed of hatred and malice, may obey Thy command and abide in Supreme Bliss.

O Thou, Ruler of hearts, the Light within and without, the Parent of all, Thou art formless

and attributeless, while Thou art the possessor of all forms and attributes. Comprehending the cause, the unseen and the seen. Thou art ever radiant in beauty. Beside Thee none is, will, or can be. If Thy creatures immersed in the joys and sorrows of Life forget Thee, Thou wilt not forget them. Forgive them their offending and save them from all evil. To save them there is none else. Unknown to them are composure of thought, concentration, meditation, constancy, adoration, and true faith, whereby to find Thee or wisely to follow Thy direction. For them even Thou art all these.

Thou dost open the day and it is day, Thou dost close the day and it is night. If all Creation combine and say, 'let night not be', yet night will be if so Thou willest. Let it bid Spring not succeed Winter, yet Spring blooms forth as by Thee ordained. If the whole world combine to will a leaf to fall from a tree against Thy appointed time, never will it fall except as appointed by Thee. When leaves fall, obeying Thy command, none to them can say 'nay'. None may succeed in expelling hunger, thirst, sleep, or watchfulness. All senses and organs instantly obey Thy command. By Thy grace all things can change. O Ruler of hearts, Thou art all-comprehending, omnipotent! Thou canst make a mustard seed a mountain and a mountain a mustard seed.

O Thou, self-reliant splendour, the ruler from within, Thou dwellest in Thy creatures' hearts! Whatever Thou willest to be done by any unto another is transmitted by the appropriate will and power, and that is done by him and Thee. Unto the king Thou sendest the kingly mind, and unto the subject what beseems him; unto the warrior warlike spirit, and unto the artist the skill in art. Thus, Thou preservest, by presence and power, the play of variety in Thy created spheres.

O Ruler of hearts, Thy creatures, of themselves, are inclined away from Thee! By Thy merciful attraction they are impelled to search after Thee and righteousness. Without Thy mercy heart nor mind can Theeward turn.

O Supreme Spirit, transcending form, action, and attribute, Thou art the Father of the universe, and yet possessed of forms, visible as Light, art the Mother. Both aspects are Thine, O Thou One, secondless, indivisible! With love supreme Thou ordainest Thy creatures' well-being on earth, and eternal beatitude. In ungrateful folly men wage fratricidal wars by imagined conflict between these, Thy dual aspects. O Plenitude, the dwellers in darkness of spirit are unable to perceive that possessed of forms, Thou art formless, and even though formless, Thou art possessed of every form and all. Admonished to receive the true faith by considering the lordly dominance

of Thy visible presence, known as Light, with contempt they reject the admonition as counselling the worship of a limited, insentient object. Forgive these their offence in Thy infinite mercy. Ordain in Thy grace, unasked, that all men may receive the true faith and thereby attain to infinite bliss.

Ruler of hearts, Parent of all, Thou art all things, and yet unseen art Thou! Whatever men may say in folly, Thou knowest they are in form and essence one with Thee—they proceed from Thee, rest in Thee, and are hidden in Thee away. Forgive the offences of men and fill the world with unbroken peace!—*Amrita Sāgara.*

II. SOCIAL

STATE AND SOCIETY

Society is not wholly unrelated to the State. It is not practicable to prevent their confluence. No form of government can last except with the consent or at least the acquiescence of the people. The form of the State marks the watershed, such as it is, between things political and social. The distinction between these two orders is not uniform all over the world. Sivanarayan's teachings on social ethics are, in their entirety, strictly applicable to the country of his birth. The spiritual basis of his teachings, previously sketched, needs no reiteration. The ensuing summary is made from his Bengali publication entitled *Amrita Sāgara*.

WOMAN

The subjection of woman by man is observable, in different degrees, all the world over. Equal freedom of the sexes is nowhere to be found. Woman suffers to the benefit of none. For the removal of her suffering few strive. Male egotism blinds the male eye. Man labours for his own enjoyment in freedom, and not for the free-

dom of man and woman. The truth is undiscerned that none can achieve freedom who works not for the freedom of all. The Divine design is clear to all who desire to see it. Let each use the gifts of God to promote the well-being of all; then blessings will come to all. Obedience to this rule will secure the well-being of man and woman alike. Just men, of heroic nature, who befriend women in fulfilment of that Divine design, are truly beloved of God. The disobedient are, and for ever will be, punished by God. Of this, doubt there is none. Man degrades woman, and she overlords him through sexual attraction. The slave cannot be his master's superior. The degraded woman lowers him the more through her sexual fascination, and so the see-saw is uninterruptedly at work. The vision is clear to eyes which are washed clean of fleshly lust.

If the Divine design, expressed in bi-sexual creation, is searched for in the light of the foregoing observations, those who value truth will readily perceive that love of freedom alone will set the lover free. Love of freedom lays a constraint on the lover to promote freedom, in disregard of the personal speciality of its exhibition. To be free one must work for the freedom of all. To desire freedom for oneself at the cost of freedom of any one else is unjust tyranny against all, including oneself, who is condemned

to slavery by the desire to tyrannize over others. Such a one's mind is a slave devising means for the enslavement of another, and so are his hands in working out the means. What is true of the individual is true of the class.

Confining attention to the country of our birth, who can deny the unnatural and unnecessary suffering of woman, as daughter, wife, and widow? But all lips are closed through false pride. The fool alone can think that in his silence all eyes are closed. The blind in spirit see woman's inferiority to man in God's design. Woman, they think, is created for man, and man for himself. Their hearts admit not that each is created for the other, and that life is for the well-being of both. If God is obeyed each will be a blessing to the other.

Hindus proclaim by word of mouth that woman represents *ahasuki*, the totality of God's powers and attributes, under many names such as Kāli, Durga, Saraswati, Lakshmi. They represent Him as Jugal-rup, the pair-formed, as Ardhanariswar, the half-woman-man Lord. But their profession of faith is belied by their acts. The truly equal-sighted one (*samadarsi*) rejoices and grieves in sympathy with all others.

Man and woman are equal inheritors of God's goodness, and it is the duty of all to preserve this equality in all things—food, dress, property, marriage, sport, amusement, and the rest. What

is blameless in him is blameless in her, what is blamable in her is blamable in him. The only instrument to help individuals to perceive and pursue the path of life, in obedience to the Divine design, is instruction, and not compulsion. Yet punishment has its own place in the scheme of instruction.

MARRIAGE

Marriage is a human institution of the first magnitude. On it depend present and future lives. If any institution is to accord with God's design, expressed in creation, it is this. That design is to secure to creatures, by their unconstrained joyous movements, the well-being of all, in the world and in Him—in conduct and in faith. Marriage must be so ordered as to promote and not obstruct that end in any individual. Minds, turned away from God, have begotten a multitude of forms of marriage among mankind. But have they or any of them fulfilled the true purpose of marriage? In what form of marriage is married unchastity wholly unknown, even if all other ills be unconsidered? If marriage was faithful to the Divine design, whence has arisen the spiritual doctrine that it is the enemy of spiritual life? True marriage is a spiritual vision. It is beyond the region of man's approval or disapproval. It is the com-

plete union of the soul with God. Ineffable joy is its offspring, alive in time and eternity. This apart, how is marriage represented in God? All religions teach that God is unsearchable, incomprehensible. Created intelligence, Godward turned, discerns but forms, perceived by the senses or conceived by the mind and their opposite, transcending both. What object does any sense perceive or the mind conceive as marriage? In God, the incomprehensible, marriage is that union of soul with Him, which is itself an incomprehensible entity. Else, it is nothing, a word without meaning—a figment, a lie, as is the word 'nothing'. The coming together of two individuals, conscious of each other's life in God, is an inward truth and the true marriage, God-appointed.

Its purpose is the fulfilment of the Divine design for the well-being of creatures. The representation of this true inward marriage in external life meets with God's approval as concordant with His design in creation. External marriage alone, of itself indeed, is unchastity, though blessed by all mankind. Let all men pause and reflect on their sufferings, the result of attempted rebellion against the Divine design for their well-being. Is the endless peace and joy, promised by God through the religions of the world, a heartless lie? Is there no Reliever for man? Search for Him with collected sobriety

and He will be found, expressed in His creation and beyond it. In Him every individual, every speck of creation is comprehended; and yet, He is one, indivisible and independent. Ask of Him forgiveness, seek refuge in Him and find never-ending, boundless joy.

MARRIAGE AND CELIBACY

Neither marriage nor celibacy should proceed from compulsion or for the purpose of self-indulgence. They must originate in the impulse for the fulfilment of the need of existence, in accordance with God's design set forth above. All human beings are not created for the perpetuation of the race. In the design of God all seeds do not germinate. Some make food for the living, some fertilize the earth. So with men. All human beings are not born for the preservation of the continuity of the race. As witness infant mortality, sterile marriage, and enforced widowhood, seemingly to be in accordance with the design of God. Voluntary celibacy, as a religious usage, is also held in honour. The married and the unmarried are equal before God. Let each, who sincerely feels the impulse, touched on above, marry when and in such manner as they will. And let those who reject marriages reject it. Let no man stand against them F' is an offence against the Divine des'b'

persuade or pervert any one to marry who feels the impulse to work out the end of individual existence alone, unmarried. All such are acceptable to God and have been accepted by Him in all ages and everywhere. Blessed are the people who accept the true form of marriage. For them prostitution and illegitimacy will not exist.

Married unchastity deserves punishment, irrespective of the offender's sex. So also does connubial neglect or ill-treatment. But marriages are terminable by genuine mutual consent or by death of a partner. Successive marriages are not blamable in either sex when untainted by treachery or wrong to others.

RELIGIOUS PROFESSION OF CELIBACY

It is open to all men, in every condition of life, to fulfil the God-appointed purpose of life in the world and beyond the world. Faith in Him and promotion of His creatures' good are alone necessary. Blind to this truth, the essence of all religion, men deck themselves with external marks of various sects, believed to be religious. External marks are of no avail. The body is the external mark, given by God to His creature. For each body is the mark, suited to

work, divinely prescribed for man. The body and its organs have their appointed work. Se-attempt to wrest them away from the

purpose of their creation is an act of unsuccessful rebellion against God, and a source of suffering. God is equal-sightedness itself. There is no preference in Him for one external form against another. Every external form is acceptable so long as it serves to fulfil the Divine purpose of creation, the temporal and spiritual well-being of God's creatures.

A man has only to open his eyes to see sannyāsīs of high repute for holiness immersed in the enjoyment of the pleasures of life as land-holders, traders, and masters of shrines and monasteries. Occasions are not rare when they are punished by law as robbers and reprobates. In obedience to the Divine design it is meant for sovereign and subject to combine and send them to their respective homes. Let them be instructed to understand that each will gain the end of existence by taking care of their dependants and holding the mind steadfast on God. Those, for any reason, unsuited for such treatment (like others through any cause made helpless and homeless) should be taken into institutions where they can be maintained with the proceeds of their labour. The true sannyāsī is he who works for the maintenance of his family and dependants and instructs all in the truth. God is his only honour and strength, he craves for none other. His heart is guileless. He brings no suffering on himself or another by

device of the world. Looking on all as the representatives of his God and his own soul he rejoices and suffers with all. God rejoices in him and plants him in endless joy.

The mighty of the world with hearts turned away from God, are unable, through doubt and fear, to strike down the workers of iniquity in the name of God. Contrary is the nature of the upright and wise, the beloved of God. Fearlessly they suppress murder, robbery, lechery, and other iniquities, blasphemously practised in the name of God. Their faith is their strength. They never doubt that what hurts His creatures is reprobated by God. Strengthened by faith, in righteous might they must trample down the enemies of mankind or suffer as traitors against God.

MOTHERHOOD AND CHILDHOOD

Because God has relieved all male human beings of the burden of motherhood they must show gratitude to Him by treating mothers in childbed with kindly care. A mother, be her position in the world high or low, is entitled to unstinted care. The lying-in room should not lack in light and air, the bed-cloth should be dry and clean, and the atmosphere fragrant with incense, and yet free from smoke. Care must be taken that she suffers not from excess of heat

or cold. Men and women, not working for mutual well-being, are guilty of ingratitude to God, whence man's sufferings flow.

Children are helpless representatives of God, committed to their parents' care. They should be taught to fulfil God's command concerning well-being, and especially instructed in good manners and courtesy. Respect for parents and obedience to them shall be so taught that these qualities may be turned Godward with the growth of life. Offerings to the fire, of things fragrant and sweet, if properly directed, will be a good beginning for social service and true faith in after life. Personal and general cleanliness is an essential element in children's education.

HEALTH, SICKNESS, AND DEATH

Cleanliness, health, and length of life go together. If earth, water, and air are not defiled, if all articles in use, and the body, within and without, are kept clean, health and long life will be secured to all. Interior uncleanness of the body is a fruitful source of painful, disastrous diseases, shortening life. It is the real poison. The danger to health from unclean surroundings is easily perceived. But the greater danger from uncleanness of the body, within and without, from hurtful food, air, and drink and the wrong use of bodily functions, is rarely noticed except

by the professional physician. If food, sleep, and natural functions are properly regulated, health and life, as gifts of God, will suffer no hurt.

All in health and strength owe it to God to tend the dying one with gentle care, to keep him and his surroundings clean, to burn incense near him, and above all to try to lead his mind Godward. It is a grievous sin to drag hither and thither the dying one, who is more helpless than a new-born babe. It is brutality and sin to disturb the dying by loud lamentation.

The disposal of the dead is for the benefit of the living, and not for the benefit of the departed soul. Putrefaction of the dead body is of great harm to the living. The soul is unconcerned whether the body is burned or buried in earth or water. The light is unconcerned whether the lamp is of gold or mud. Let the sight of the dead be a reminder of the inevitable end of this life, which must be lived in view of its end. No mourning should be observed to the hurt of social service.

LOWER ANIMALS

Let all men pause and reflect, irrespective of race and religion. How you suffer for want of food in hunger, for want of water in thirst, how you are hurt by even the piercing of a thorn or

when worked beyond strength! Consider the suffering from fettered hand and foot, or imprisonment in a narrow cell. And yet such is the treatment you accord to inferior animals who are also creatures of God. None even dream of their suffering. O Man, thou art able to speak! To others thou canst express thy suffering! But not so the dumb creature. Its cry none can understand. It is different with God. He knows when the meanest of His creatures suffers. But men kill birds and beasts for mere sport. Many animals, lower in man's sight, are of great service to man. Let all take heed lest by cruelty to dumb creatures they draw down on themselves the just sentence of God.

Animals, placed in forests by the Creator, are free to enjoy such life as God has given them. Man imprisons them or slaughters them for food. If the intelligence, which divides man from beast, is not used for its benefit the separation disappears, leaving man a fellow of the beast.

No animal should unnecessarily be used as food. When necessary it should be killed with the infliction of the least possible amount of pain.

Domestic animals deserve to be cared for well. Let these not suffer from hunger, thirst, over-work, or want of rest and sleep. Treat them so that man and animal may equally benefit. Let no animal suffer from man's mere vanity or curiosity, and blessing will be on all.

FLOWER AND FRUIT

In the design of God flowers are a source of joy to the beholder because of their beauty, and of purification to the atmosphere because of their fragrance. They are to be plucked when really necessary, and not even then without grateful acknowledgments to God. Ripe fruits are food for man and animal. They are to be received with thanksgiving. Love of God and His design in creation forbids their wilful destruction or misuse.

WEALTH AND ENJOYMENT

Money and commodities have God as their ultimate source. As a perpetual reminder of this truth it is right for individuals to keep an account with Him. All possessions should be entered on the credit side of the account, and all outgoings, of every kind, debited to Him through the actual recipient. Thus are all possessions dedicated to Him.

All enjoyments, be the mind or the body the instrument, are sanctified by the declared conviction that the object and instrument of enjoyment, as also the enjoyer, exist only through the being and power of God. Thus is gained freedom of spirit, the final end of existence.

BLAME AND PRAISE

Life is motion. Something is left behind, and something is reached. When the something reached is in the direction of well-being it is Progress. True Progress combines bodily welfare with spiritual. It means the fulfilment of need. This is prompted in thought and speech by blame and praise. Both may be useless, even hurtful, to the service of true Progress. When rightly generated blame is not of hatred, nor praise conducive to pride. What is called Good and what is called Evil can both be made serviceable to the final end of existence—life in God, joy eternal.

Sin and sorrow were my friends,
Upon the road I trod
And they both me Godward turned
Life to have in God?

III. POLITICAL

The Paramhansa Sivanarayan Swāmi was practically illiterate. With difficulty he could write his name in Hindu script. His political views may not be instructive to all, but owing to the nature of their origin will have an interest of their own.

A brief statement of his fundamental teachings will serve as a helpful introduction to this special subject.

Social order, inclusive of the political, must, according to him, be based upon faith in God as the Creator and moral Governor of the Universe. As the Creator of all He is equally related to all. As the moral Governor of all He wills equally the well-being of all. Creation is wonderfully diverse, especially in individual existence. No repetition taints individual diversity. No two individuals are identical as individuals, while the type to which they all belong is one. And the oneness of the type, recognized or not, is the foundation of the moral order imposed by God on His creation. Individual existence necessarily implies movements, individually separate, but all directed towards well-being. No action in any individual is possible, except for the fulfilment

of some want. Intelligence, in that stage of development where moral consciousness is possible, implies the consciousness of Want as the motive of action, and the adaptation of means to the one end, namely, the fulfilment of the want. By Intelligence is to be understood the consciousness of things that *are*, and their true relation to one another; while the consciousness of Want, the impulse for a change and the anticipated and realized gratification or disappointment accompanying such fulfilment or its opposite may be generically termed Emotion. The persistence of movement towards such fulfilment may be called the Will. These three in their relation to the individual may be collectively designated the Mind. The individual mind, conscious of the moral governorship of the Creator of All, necessarily attempts to reduce any idea into thought moving to action. The first step in this direction is the consciousness of the type to which individuals belong. This necessarily implies a more complete realization of individual nature, resulting in the conviction that the well-being of the individual cannot be secured by what offends against the type, forming, so to speak, the substance of which the individuals are but forms or modes of existence. To offend against any individual is to offend against the type of which the offender is also a form, and the offence is therefore an offence against

the offender himself. On the other hand, where an individual is constrained, against his will, to conform to his type, it is conducive to his well-being, and as such is accepted by all individuals, conscious of the type, as lawful punishment. In other words, it is a help to the punished individual to realize the type to which he belongs that it may turn his mind in the true direction of his well-being. In the Scriptures, accepted by Brahmins as universally authoritative, the idea touched on above has an attractive poetical expression. God's creative agency is personified as Brahma or the archangel of Creation, and is called 'Jivaghanah', literally meaning the aggregate of all individuals. On the acceptance of Jivaghanah as the true Self, by transference to him of natural self-love, the individual crosses beyond good and evil. In other words, such an individual spontaneously acts as the representative of all individuals; and there is not, and cannot be, anywhere any conflict with this motive of action from which alone can arise evil. And as he is not conscious of doing anything for another's sake the sense of merit is abolished. The hand has no sense of merit when picking out a thorn from the foot. This thought appears very difficult, and is almost impossible to be grasped by non-Brahmin critics of the Brahmin religion. They think the doctrine means the abolition of the sense of right and wrong in individual life,

and the enthronement of self-will as the sole rule of conduct, whereas it really means the ever-doing of right for the joy of it, without any thought beyond it. The selfishness of Jivaghanah is the well-being of all individuals. Translating the doctrine into current idiom one would say that when in an individual his will is in harmony with the will of the Creator, then of all his movement, in every plane of existence, it is self-determined or God-determined, and therefore not characterizable as right or wrong, neither of which can exist without the possibility of the other. Similarly the devotee is helped to assimilate the incomprehensibility of God, accepted by all religions, claiming it to be revealed, by the ascription to Him in Brahminical Scriptures of contradictory attributes, such as 'He moves, He moves not; He is distant, He is near; He is other than righteousness (*dharma*), He is other than unrighteousness', and a multitude of similar expressions. In the absence of such constant reminders the profession of a belief in God's incomprehensibility is almost sure to degenerate into idle words, leaving no impression on the mind, which thus becomes an exile from superrational conviction or true faith.

The relation between faith and character is declared by the *Bhagavad Gitā* (ch. xii, vv. 13 *et seq.*) in the following words:

Hating no creature, full of brotherly love, and compassionate,

devoid of selfishness; devoid of egotism, equal to suffering and enjoyment, forgiving, ever content, of tranquil heart, with nature subjugated, firm in intent, and full of thought, with faith given up to Me, whoever is My devotee is dear unto Me.

The idea is further elucidated by Sureswar, Sankar's immediate successor, and the first Mohunt or abbot of the Srigeri monastery, founded by the latter. 'In regard to him who has obtained the true vision of the spirit, the qualities of "Hating no creature and the like" are his without effort, and not as a form of devotion' (*naiskarmasiddhih*).

To sum up: The quality, accompanying true faith in God and really forming another aspect of it, is a gift, and not an acquisition. Its short name is Love, called in Sanskrit 'Samadrishti'. The dynamic or practical aspect of Love is the law of reason, shortly Expediency, which negatives both inappropriateness and waste of energy.

The foregoing observations, rationally tested, will, perhaps, be found a helpful introduction to a statement of the political views of the Paramhansa Sivanarayan Swāmi. They furnish a ready and rational test of all practical opinion, political and social. The ensuing citations are summarized from his published teachings in Bengali. The English translation is faithful, but not literal:

GENERAL DUTY OF THOSE IN POWER

'In ignorance men think that social life is wholly distinct from spiritual life which is attainable by the anchorite alone and unattainable by a social being. Thus convinced, householders in despair remain prisoners to things of the world, in life and in death. While those wearing external marks of asceticism, despise the others, and are proud of self-torture. The two classes can never meet in equality of love. Thus arise contending sects, obscuring true spirituality. They know not that life in God is one, however different its external expression. . . . Where there is no capacity there is no duty. God does not expect from an individual the use of what he has not received from God. By the application of the gifts of God to the well-being of all, the duty of the individual is performed and the end of his existence attained. Those charged with the governance of people, those gifted with wealth, lordship, learning, and intelligence have special potencies. Their burdens of duty are therefore special. Their duties, performed according to the design of God in creation, fill the world with well-being. There are three kinds of motive of action, namely, love, gain, and fear. The single motive of action of those whose love is God and who are therefore beloved of Him, is equal-sighted love of His creatures. They not

only act in love but teach others to do likewise. Superfluous for them is man-made law. But their number is small. The getting of something desired or the fear of its loss is the usual motive of human action. Men of moral limitations cannot be devoted to duty except by reward and punishment, under laws, enforced by the specially gifted classes. But such laws cannot produce the wished-for result unless laid down and worked with wise and loving discrimination. No good can come in the absence of such discrimination. Kingship is not bestowed to subjugate others, wealth to impoverish, and wisdom to befool others. If God had intended His special gifts for their recipients' personal gratification, their capacity for self-gratification, their length of life would have been without human measure. But naked all come, and naked all go into the fire or the earth. And numbered are the days of all. The pleasures of life pall, and turn to bitterness. That all may perform the journey of life in peace and contentment is the design of God. Those with powers to promote that end are punished by the just sentence of God for misuse of those powers. Justice and kindness should guide the rule of conduct, for they have Divine approval. In obedience to that rule, those who are qualified for it should labour in all things for the civilizing and education of all placed in their care. Thus will be secured the well-being of all, and the

true end of existence will be gained. A contrary course can only lead to a contrary result."—*Amrita Sāgara*.

THE SPECIAL DUTY OF RULERS OF PEOPLE

'King's officers go about to detect the offences of people to the end that the same be punished. But they should also go about to discover the wants of people to the end that they be relieved. The agriculturist in want of land, cattle, or seed, must be supplied therewith, and similar treatment be meted out to the business man in want of capital. The proceeds of taxation, adjusted to the capacity of the payer, should be utilized for this purpose. Inflictions by visitations of God should be relieved, irrespective of nationality or other political considerations. The paramount duty of rulers is the preservation of peace. And this is impossible when particular groups of people are allowed in the name of religion to ascribe special sanctity to natural objects, or to act in opposition to other similar groups. This consideration deserves the special attention of rulers. The welfare of those whose livelihood for the moment depends on the existence of such practices also deserves special consideration.

'It is an important duty of those who rule peoples to provide refuges, dispensaries, and hospitals for the benefit of man and beast. All

are creatures of God, they issue from Him, subsist in Him and, though unseen, abide in Him for ever. He is equal towards them all as parents to their children.

'Justice requires the proper distribution of reward and punishment, but no offender should be so punished so as to afflict with suffering those dependent on him. Rewards must be impartially distributed without any consideration of race or nationality. Speedy destruction invariably follows conduct affected by such considerations. Of this there is no doubt.'—*Amrita Sāgara.*

WAR AND PEACE

'For sport and amusement men set beasts' to fight with one another, even unto death. Nations fight with one another for glory or gain. These, lost to faith in God, rejoice in wars. Casting away pride and conceit, reflect on these things with calm sobriety.

'Men are all equally related to God. Have steadfast faith in Him, act in obedience to the Divine design in pride of power. This is the duty of mankind in general, but more especially of the holder of the sceptre of power. The lion-hearted ruler, thus acting, is beloved of God. Putting false glory behind him, and what the blind of spirit call "disgrace" before him, he

goes forth to preserve all things in their advance towards their God-appointed end. He knows in his heart that an attempt to wrest things from their God-appointed end, to work against the fulfilment of the purpose of their creation is the only true disgrace. The hog fattens on filth. The self-centred man is worse than a hog. Movement towards the God-appointed end is Peace. The opposite is War, be it large or be it small.

'And yet there is a place for war in the design of creation. When the sovereign forgets the purpose with which sovereignty is created and violates the law of God; by attempting to obstruct the application of things to the end for which they exist, when he attempts to draw away his people from the path of righteousness, defiles the purity of earth, water, fire, and air, stands in the way of individuals freely working for the supreme bliss in obedience to God's command, then all equal-sighted men (*samadarsi*), sovereign or subject, must arm for war, dethrone the kingly rebel against God, and hold him in subjection. If, in his own person, he realizes the evil he has wrought on his subjects, his throne shall be restored to him. Thus, in obedience to God's love, the sovereign and the subject shall all live in peace.

'To promote mutual sympathy and good-will between subject and sovereign the ancient Brahminical law required princes and inheritors of

power to spend the early years of manhood in *Brahmachārya*, leading the common life, and thus personally realizing the conditions of life, high and low. Thus were they prepared to feel for all, and render them service.'—*Amrita Sāgara*.

In conclusion, the following extract is cited from an English version of the Paramhansa's teachings on this subject, published in his life-time under the title, *A Word in Season* :

"It is the duty of all men, with purity of body, mind, and senses to labour for the world's good. Let each, according to his capacity, work for the good of his family, village, town, district, province, country, and the world at large. Let him, amongst you, who is incapable of anything more, achieve his own good. Thus acting, you will render the cry "bande mataram" purposeful, and fulfil the command of the real Mother. The well-being of her children, the inhabitants of the earth, consists in fulfilling her command. Else, the cry becomes a source of hatred and contention and charged with the world's ill.

'God wears the mask of sovereignty to rule the people for their own good. Men desire sovereignty. But few understand the qualifications which the aspirant must present to find favour in God's sight. Sovereignty may be bestowed on one man or a body of men collectively. The sovereign must be "equal-sighted"

(*samadarsi*) towards all, absolutely just and impartial. The sovereign must look upon his subjects with love and reverence due to the representative of God and his own soul, and with sleepless, active zeal labour for their welfare in every way. Looking upon the sovereign as the representative of God and their own souls, it is the duty of the subjects to promote the general well-being, which must necessarily include their own individually, by co-operating with Him in loving obedience, with sincerity and without reserve. Thus acting, the sovereign and the subject will secure the favour of that Being to whom alone the salutation "bande mataram" can be most appropriately applied; and, by that Being's favour, peace and welfare will come to all. Sober reflection will show that man's power is by delegation from God. Those alone will rule on whom the power to rule has been divinely conferred. If the sovereign violates his duty, afflictions will visit him from man and God, and take away his power. If the subjects violate their duty they will be scourged with a whip of scorpions. When the sovereign punishes the subjects in obedience to duty, by God laid down, the punishment is from God, a purifying fire. If the subjects, in obedience to duty, divinely ordained, punish a sovereign, it is of like effect and significance. Neither sovereign nor subject, except to his hurt, can transgress the law

of Righteousness set forth above. The all-comprehending Supreme Being, regarded as Light, is one and secondless, and there is none to gainsay Him in aught. Nothing can trouble the sovereign He upholds on the throne, and no one can maintain the sovereignty He wills to destroy.

'It is by the ordinance of this Being that such a diversity of products is shown in the different countries of the world; what is abundant in one is unknown in another. This is necessary for the proper appreciation of the gifts of God. If God is obeyed, then export and import trade must be based upon a mutual desire for the fulfilment of each other's wants. By the interdependence of countries God strings them together for the good of all. Apply all things to their God-appointed end. It is the special duty of possessors of power and wealth to preserve this law. Thus acting, the stream of life will flow unimpeded, and the good of all will be secured thereby, and the sovereign and the subject, high and low, will rejoice thereat. A contrary course entails punishment both from man and God. This is the real truth, that the all-comprehending Supreme Being OM, manifested as the Light, including in Himself sun, moon, and all individuals, male and female, is the one Reality or Substance, self-manifest and dispenser of all good. This Being alone is the world's father, mother, teacher, and the one

object of adoration for all. All eyes are struck blind when He withdraws His light by night. When He withdraws sentience all individuals pass into deep slumber, where thought is not. When He withdraws the breath of life all bodies decay in death. Struck by His lightning-power the world is burnt to ashes or crushed into dust. A stirring of His subterranean fire will wipe out proud cities and empires. Away from Him whom have you imagined as the recipient of your worship with the cry of "bande mataram"? Besides Him no adorable mother is, was, or can be. Accept this, the unshakable truth! Seek after the truth with discrimination, and you will soon perceive who it is whom you have imagined as the mother to receive your words of devotion. The prayers of one man of true devotion to the real Mother, one of "equal-sighted" wisdom, will move Her with all Her powers to the rescue of the world, groaning in misery. Nothing has as yet been lost. Be "equal-sighted" and put your feet forward to establish the reign of righteousness wherein defeat is unknown. For the Mother will be ever with you, scattering blessings with both hands.'

THE PASSING OF THE MASTER

THERE was only a fading echo of winter in the air. The days lengthened as you looked on. The trees whispered a tremulous green. The *koel* piped a welcome to peeping spring. The river expiated its muddy sin. The frown on the cloud's face was changed to a smile. The earth opened her sleep-refreshed eyes to the quickening light of the sun.

It was the 4th of February 1909. The moon was at her full. But ere she had thrown her protecting shield over a day-wearied world or the westering sun had disappeared behind a maze of colours, a man died. A man whom there were few to know and fewer still to love. But he loved all. Those that loved him found not the ends of his love. The love with which he loved them made them doubt their own. The rest passed it by. The rest left unloved the love that was he. Love is rare. Love is not known when seen.

He died amidst mean surroundings. But the treasures of his soul transcended price.

There, where the tram-cars discharge their pious load of pilgrims to Kāli's shrine, a road

bends eastward. It lies like an ensanguined scimitar, between neglected garden-lands, leaf-thatched huts, green-scummed, evil-smelling tanks, and low, one-story brick structures which shrink with shame from their surroundings.

On a loop of this road lies a patch of ground, fenced round with split bamboos and hedge-plants, green and quick. Garden trees cast mild, miniature suns over a humble hut, by the side of a little tank. Into the tank descends a flight of masonry steps. In this the Master lay, weak as a child, pure as the smokeless flame, peaceful as the moon's beam, steadfast as the noonday sun. Tended by the gentle care of disciples, obscure and of no account amongst men, the Master's last breath went forth like a blessing through space. The sun sucks up vapour from the sea to pour it out in rain. The soul of the righteous man goes back to its Father to be poured out as love, wisdom, and peace.

Borne on the shoulders of those he had begotten in the light that is God, the man that perishes, that loses form and name, was placed beside flowing water and there reverently delivered to fire that renders pure all it touches, and sanctifies man's heart like a great love. A human frame lost a life which was gained by all who loved the soul, radiating as wisdom, beneficence, and love.

The disciples, tears in eyes and peace at heart,

purified by the example of love and wisdom in life and in death, averted their faces from the burning fire and departed into a world dark with unwisdom and unlove. May they keep the torch burning and hand it down, undimmed, through the time to come!

APPENDIX I

THE SEVEN QUESTIONS

I. TRUE RENUNCIATION

'Who is a man of true renunciation?' 'The great-souled sādhu.' With this answer the question was submitted to the decision of Sivnarayan, who replied, saying: 'True, a sādhu is a man of renunciation. But it must be soberly considered in what respect he is so. In its true light the renunciation of the householder is greater than his. The sādhus view this world as the fabric of a dream, and they renounce it as unreal. Even then some individuals of that class are subject to the egotistic conceit that they are men of renunciation, and others also look upon them as such because they have cut themselves off from the world. The sādhu takes a pride in renouncing what is unreal. But the householder, in becoming attached to the world, renounces the truth, which is God. In other words, the householder in fulfilling the duties divinely imposed on him has often to hide himself from God, the all-comprehending Supreme Being, whose expression is Light, who is the

Parent, Teacher, and Soul of all, in whom all things are to be found. Then whose renunciation is the truer and greater? It behoves every man to pause and ponder what thing is his to accept or renounce? Man has not the power to produce even a blade of grass. Can he, then, say with truth: "This have I given up or this accepted"? He is powerless alike to renounce or accept. All things are God's; he is also God's. Comprehending all things and persons, He is secondless and expressed as light. He can neither be taken nor left. He who is equal-minded to all that is, is the man of true renunciation. He alone knows what renunciation truly is. Be he an ascetic recluse or a social householder, he makes no distinction between the two conditions'.

II. WOMAN AND SŪDRA

The Marwari, intending the question for Sivanarayan, asked the pundit Joykishen why women and sūdras had no right to utter the holy name OM, the sacred formula *Gāyatri*, to make offering in the fire, and to study the Vedas. The pundit replied such injunctions were found in some of the scriptures, and invited Sivanarayan to explain the reason.

'Rights and disabilities,' said Sivanarayan, 'are found in all creatures. I shall explain the

principle from palpable instances, so that you may apply it to matters less obvious. The thirsty man will not find pleasure in food, but in water. He therefore has a right to water and a disability in respect of food. Similarly, the hungry man has a wish for food rather than water. The man who is deeply attached to objects of sense, who is devoid of aspirations towards the all-comprehending Supreme Being, manifested as Light, the individual and universal Soul, finds no joy in what is scriptural. Such a man has no right concerning God and holy things. That right is denied to such a condition of mind, be it found in a woman, a sūdra, or a Brahmin. The man who inclines not to objects of sense, or while so inclining is inspired with a desire for God, to be united with Him intimately, losing all feeling of separateness, to know Him and worship Him in love and devotion, has a disability in relation to things of sense, and a right to things of God, the holy name OM, the sacred formula *Gāyatri*, fire-offerings, Vedic studies, and the practice of Brahamachārya.¹ From the doing of good works good results ensue, be the doer a woman, a sūdra, or a Brahmin. In your Institutes of Manu it is said: "The sūdra attains Brahminhood and the Brahmin falls into the condition of sūdra". The Brahmin of evil life is a sūdra; and the sūdra, doing good works, is a Brahmin. One

¹ The life of self-denying search after God.

of the Upanishads says: "Whoso knows God is a Brahmin". "Who sees at all times everything around filled with God is a Brahmin". Judged by this test one Brahmin may be found in ten millions. The Yajur Veda¹ says: "Proclaim these words of blessedness to the people, the Brahmin, the prince, the sūdra, to the friend and the stranger". The plain import of this text is that all should search the Vedas for God, the cream of all Scriptures, and do good works. Let the outcast *chandāla*, or one deemed lower even than he, study the Vedas and other scriptures, receive the true spirit thereof, and inspired by that spirit perform his duties, human and divine. To this there should be no hindrance. The invocation of God by His name OM, the Gāyatri-worship, the end whereof is the acquisition of that knowledge which reveals God, who is all-comprehending, complete, expressed as Light, these constitute the true study of the Vedas. The Vedas are but a name for wisdom. The scripture which teaches truth, the person that teaches truth, should be accepted as the Vedas or wisdom. This true wisdom, filling all things, within and outside of you, is one, and manifested to your sense as Light. Guided by the true meaning of these words understand all things.'

'It is written in the Scriptures,' added the

¹ Bk. xxvi, v. 2.

Marwari, 'by birth comes the sūdra; by reason of the Sacraments one is called Dwija (twice-born); by scriptural studies one becomes a Vipra (learned man); he who knows Brahīnā, the Supreme Being, is a Brahmin. At birth a man has no notion as to the nature of the self or God; this condition is indicated by the word *sūdra*. By purification and acquisition of knowledge he attains to the condition of *dwija* and *vipra*. When through love and devotion the individual sees God, uniting himself with that all-comprehending, complete Being, he is called a brahmin. He may also be called in that condition Brahmā.'

'True,' said Sivanarayan.

'To attain to that condition is the supremest good fortune,' said Joykishen.

Another pundit who was present seemed not to understand, though he understood, and said: 'How can a sūdra be allowed to do the works of a Brahmin?'

'What is it that you call sūdra?' asked Sivanarayan; 'what substance is signified by that name? Is it the physical or the subtle body, or are the baser qualities of character or the evil acts of life called sūdra? If the subtle body, without which the physical body is inert and unintelligent, then all creatures are equally sūdra. If the soul be sūdra, then all creatures are sūdra. If the physical body be sūdra all creatures must

be sūdra, all physical bodies being equally composed of flesh, blood, bones, etc. In truth or substance creatures are not Brahmin, sūdra, or any other caste. In reality the division into castes is a social convention, founded originally upon differences of individual qualities, habits, and occupations. In truth no caste exists. Whoso is gifted with good qualities and whose works are good is a Brahmin; one of an opposite character is a sūdra. You can see for yourselves that one who is honoured to-day in Hindu society as a Brahmin is hated and despised to-morrow on becoming a Christian or Musalman, his very touch being avoided by Hindus as pollution. But what has he done? He has merely changed from the society of his birth to the society of his adoption, and with that change has changed his habits and mode of life. His physical body, senses, and organs have undergone no change. What he was, the same he remains. The senses and organs continue to perform their proper functions, as ordained by God. This ordination can be altered by none. The eye alone will see, the ear hear, what is the society to which a man is attached or the religion he professes. The soul is neither Hindu nor Christian nor Mahomedan, the name alone changes. You see it and understand it not, reaping the bitter fruits of unwisdom.'

III. PENITENT PERVERTS

'Should a Hindu convert to Christianity or Mahomedanism be taken back into the society of his birth?'

'Listen with patience,' said Sivana-ayan, 'and decide with sober discrimination. The pure can communicate their purity to the impure. The pure tongue of fire can lap up all things foul into its own pure essence. The ocean receives all waters, and remains unperturbed in its fullness. When the Hindus were pure and great they accepted all men, establishing them in the performance of duty. So long as the Hindus had vigour of mind and body, they considered all alike. Even now, if there be a man amongst you pure and great as the fire or ocean he would receive into the Hindu fold all desirous of entering it, making them repeat the name of God, OM, as often as may be deemed necessary. But a weak man, overcome by the hesitancy of fear, will never venture to be righteous.'

IV. OM

The Marwari asked: 'What is OM, what is His appearance, where is He, has He a form or is He formless? If formless, He will not respond to sense or thought; if He has form, He will have the opposite characteristic'.

‘Saints and sages,’ said Sivanarayan, ‘have expounded this subject as God moved them. I shall explain it to you so that having seen it in the world of sense you can apply the subtle significance of it to all things, within and without, above and below. Of God in His attributeless, invisible aspect the name OM has not been imagined. Sages and saints have applied that name to Him in the aspect which is expressed as the universe, moving and stationary, and sometimes called the “body” of God. Continual utterance of this name constitutes an act of divine worship. In His expressed aspect, the root elements of that name are represented by the sounds *A*, *U*, *M*, which again represent Brahamā, Vishnu, Siva, or the three forces or qualities, *rajas*,¹ *sattwa*,² and *tammas*,³ accepted by philosophers. From these all things proceed, persist, and end. Thinking of Him as creating the universe by His *rajas* energy He is called Brahamā, as preserving the universe by *sattwa* energy He is called Vishnu, and as destroying or withdrawing creation into Himself by His *tammas* energy He is called Siva. Energy is visibly present as Light. As presented to our consciousness, Energy assumes seven forms or aspects. These seven are variously called in the

¹ i.e. the outgoing impulse.

² i.e. illuminating or intelligent influence.

³ i.e. destroying or inhibiting influence.

Scriptures the seven substances, the seven elements, the seven Rishis, the seven Vyāhritis (expressions) of Gāyatri, the seven case inflexions in grammar. With *ahankāra* (self-consciousness) added, these seven are known as the eight *prakritis* or natures of things. Under the endless multitude of names these seven are seen. They are the perceptible earth, water, fire, air, ākāsa, the moonlight, and the sunlight. From the earth and water proceed flesh, bones, and blood; from the fire powers of digestion and speech; from the air the breath of life; from the ākāsa hearing; from the moonlight the mind which doubts and resolves; from the sunlight the powers of sight and discrimination. From light in the last-named form comes the understanding of the Vedas, the Bible, the Puran, the Koran, and all other Scriptures of the world. By association with this light all temporal and spiritual actions are performed. All that moves or is stationary, the female and the male, have proceeded from this sevenfold manifestation of OM. The female and the male being alike OM have equally the privilege of using that sacred syllable in invocation. In the Brahmin's daily prayer the OM is invoked as female: *OM āyāhi varade devi, etc.*'¹

'I do not know, my lord,' said the Marwari, 'if I have correctly received your teaching. The seven-formed OM constitutes the body of God.

¹ 'OM, come, thou goddess, giver of boons.'

Are these seven, different persons or one and the same person?"

'Clear your mind,' continued Sivanarayan, 'and listen with attention. He is not seven, He is One. To external vision the seven appear as in your body different powers or faculties of sensation and action. You hear with the ears, see with the eyes, and so forth. The one organism called the body is thus seen differently by external vision, that is, by confining the attention to what seems from outside. But the conscious agent who perceives the body or presides over the operations of the senses and faculties is the individual You, one and indivisible. Similarly, although the seven are perceived by you externally the One Supreme Being is self-existent, comprehending all things in Himself. As you, through each limb, sense, and faculty, perform the work appropriate to each, so does He. By water He cools and by fire He heats, and not the reverse. As you, the conscious agent, perceive pleasure or pain or any other disturbance connected with every organ and faculty, so does He, the Indweller and Regulator of the universe, know all things and show all things to individuals by promptings from within. As you are supreme in your body so in this manifested universe the light is supreme. At the rising and the setting of light, which is the supreme eye, bow down to the all-comprehending Supreme Being and con-

stantly invoke Him by uttering inwardly His name OM. He will understand and mercifully unite you to His external manifestation, which is Light, and inwardly you shall dwell in the indescribable, unindicatable Supreme Being, in everlasting joy. The loving child bows down before his parent's eye. The parent knows "This is my beloved child bowing down before me". He answers love with love. So acts God to all who worship Him in the presence of Light, the divine Eye.'

V

'Sages have taught different doctrines in different scriptures. Which shall we accept and which reject? Certitude of conviction nowise comes to us.'

'All your doubts will disappear if you search after essential substance. Examine with discrimination what substance or truth there is in the universe beside which all else is unsubstantial, untruth. Thus discriminating, hold your thoughts steadfast in the all-comprehending Supreme Being—the Truth, Substance, or Reality. If every man on earth preached a doctrine different from the rest, that Being would still neither increase nor grow less, or otherwise undergo any change. He would be what He is. Consider how many doctrines have,

in the march of time, appeared on earth and disappeared from it. The force of doctrines has not brought, nor ever will bring into existence even a blade of grass. The Supreme Being is the same through beginningless time. In the formless, attributeless aspect He is what He is; in the other aspect, comprehending the endless variety of forms, He is manifested as Light. In the forms of earth, water, fire, air, ākāsa, light, moon, and sun, you all persist ever the same. Rishis, Munis, Pirs, Paigambars, Jesus Christ, and all the other incarnations of every race and faith cannot make Him grow more or less. Doctrines may be uttered by the mouth or written down in scriptures; the One will never be many. It therefore behoves all men, princes and peasants, with discrimination to establish their minds on what is—the Truth; and thus established to fulfil their duties, temporal and spiritual. Thus will man's troubles be ended. The Truth is but another name for the Supreme Being, all-comprehending, and expressed as Light. In His two aspects aforementioned He is complete and all-inclusive. He being accepted, all errors and doubts will vanish. It is not necessary for man to accept or reject doctrines. From one view-point all doctrines are the same. It is palpable to your senses that men of all doctrines dwell upon the same earth; by the same fire they all fulfil their fleshly needs, the same air is the

life-breath of all, by the same light they all see how to perform the work of life. Can God alone be different according to difference of doctrine? Why do you fall into error? Cast aside all thoughts of glory and disgrace, triumph and defeat, pride, and selfishness, and with peace at heart and sobriety of understanding search out the Truth or Reality, and all errors will end.

'My lord,' said one, voicing the thoughts of all present, 'you have spoken the words of truth. We ought to receive them as such, and if God has mercy on us we shall so receive them.'

VI

'Should women be educated? Some say this is an imperative duty, while others condemn it, as generating pride and other evil tendencies in women.'

'Judge, you all present, with sobriety and calmness. That education generates evil tendencies in women is a mistake. If education led to such results in women, why should it be different in the case of men? Education should, therefore, be condemned in both. You can all see that among men there are countless numbers with evil tendencies. Such tendencies flow from the corrupt natures of individuals. Education invigorates conscience, renders patience, sobriety,

and steadfastness active. And these in their turn by degrees eradicate the tendencies for evil.

'It is the duty of the State and the individual to establish and promote the education of women. Educated women can properly bring up their children, and fulfil with discrimination all other temporal and spiritual duties. If for any reason the husband is prevented from maintaining the family, an educated wife becomes an efficient substitute. If widowed, she can be the stay of her infant children. Without education she is helpless and often driven to mean occupations or to the path of sin, losing all opportunities for temporal or spiritual advancement. Consider the European woman and her helpfulness to husband and family. You will always find educated labour more profitable than uneducated. With true education all will be well, and men and women, in harmony, spend their days in the fulfilment of their duties, temporal and spiritual. In the subtle qualities woman is man's superior. Under similar conditions a woman more rapidly advances in human and spiritual knowledge than man. Moved by selfishness, man shuts out knowledge from woman, lest male authority should suffer. But God's law is different; all creatures should have full liberty to serve Him by the fullest development of all the faculties which God's hand has planted in their breasts.'

'True, my lord,' said the pundit, 'if we can only agree among ourselves.'

VII

'Is child marriage to be preferred to marriage in maturer years?'

'Listen with undisturbed minds' and decide with sobriety of thought and discriminating judgment. God should be worshipped with obedience, in accordance with His nature and laws as manifested to our sense and reason. To pluck a green mango is against God's law; such a fruit is not agreeable in taste nor wholesome in effect. Its seed does not germinate, or if, under unusual conditions, it does, the growth is sterile or the fruit poor. If, on the other hand, the ripe fruit be taken, in obedience to God's law, it pleases the palate, and nourishes the body. A vigorous tree grows from its seed, yielding sweet and strengthening fruit. Similarly, the children of immature parents are weak in body and mind, sickly and short-lived. Opposite characteristics are inherited from parents of maturer years and understanding. Such is God's purpose. Let children, between five and twenty years of age, be well instructed in their human and divine duties. Let their minds be established on the all-comprehending Being, and let them accept the social discipline of obedience to

elders in years of understanding. Thus acting, men reach the happiness God is ready to bestow on all.'

'We ought to accept your words with our hearts and obey them in our acts,' said the hearer.

APPENDIX II

IN the course of his wanderings many instances of fraud, practised by holy ascetics and learned Brahmins, in the name of religion, came under Sivanarayan's notice. Some of these are set forth here, names being suppressed for obvious reasons. An examination of the narratives shows that ignorance and superstition are the chief confederates of priestly imposition and holy rascality. Derision and heartless ridicule are the only consolations granted to the victim of misplaced confidence. Naturally he hides his fate from his neighbours, who are too timid and lazy to punish the wrong, and too cruel to sympathize with suffering.

There is no power in the universe which is or can be outside of God. None may wrest the end from the means appointed by Him thereto, or achieve an end except by the means rendered appropriate by Him. He heats by fire and cools by water. The work of the one He does not perform by the other, His laws none can transcend; what men call miracles are also subject to His laws. Why should He allow a miracle without an adequate cause? Those alone

fall into error and are deceived whose faces are turned away from Him. Those who seek refuge in the Supreme Being manifested as Light find the wisdom which removes all errors and establishes man in the supreme joy. Of this, doubt there is none.

The holy impostor, taking advantage of some temporal or spiritual weakness of the beholder, shows false miracles for his own gain or glorification, or to serve some equally selfish end. The ensuing narratives make this clear. But on reflection it will be evident that of all things God alone is the master. As nothing is outside of Him, in Him all things are equal. If glory really exists it must be His form, quality, or power; transcending Him no glory is or can be, anywhere or at any time. As the all-comprehending glory He is eternally self-existent. To leave Him in search of glory is folly. Looking to the world's good, He bestows on an individual all powers necessary for the work assigned to him. In this there is nothing strange or miraculous. An unfaltering, loving faith in Him compasses the temporal and spiritual end of existence, without any ceremonial display. Without His mercy nothing can be accomplished. If He be merciful there is nothing to obstruct His mercy. None can deceive him whose refuge is God. He being found, all ends are gained, all wants fulfilled.

I. MILK FROM WINE

In the midst of incantations and other deceptive ceremonies, pills of pounded *sāti* rice¹ are secretly introduced into the bottle of liquor. The bottle shaken, the liquid assumes a milky colour before the beholder's eyes. The holy rogue is worshipped as a god, and the true God is forsaken.

II. MANUFACTURING GOLD

A hollow pellet of cow-dung or ground charcoal is filled with a small piece of very inferior gold. Concealing this on his person, the artful *sannyāsi*, while preparing his *chillum* (earthen smoking-bowl) with *gēnjā* (*Cannabis Indica*) or tobacco, inserts it in the bowl. The smoking finished, the bowl is emptied so that his host can see the contents, and the holy man takes leave. The simple-minded householder notices the gold, and attributes it to the blessings of Siva, whom, he is convinced, he has entertained unawares in the form of the *sannyāsi*. With humble prayers and earnest solicitations the wise ascetic, lingering at no great distance, is brought back to the house and worshipped. His fame spreads and gives him the desired opportunity to steal valuables, and not unfrequently to defile hospitable households.

¹ A red rice from Behar.

Sometimes the sannyāsi promises to double all gold and silver things brought to him. A piece of cloth, its ends tied into a knot, and hanging from his shoulder as a bag (*jhuli*), contains hollow earthen balls. Into one or more of these, through suitable openings, are introduced the articles to be doubled. The sannyāsi and his host shut themselves up in a room to worship with proper rites and ceremonies the balls containing the articles. While the host, obeying instructions, meditates with closed eyes, empty balls are substituted for those originally used. The worship ended, the sannyāsi departs, leaving strict injunction that the balls are not to be disturbed till the following day, when the promise will be fulfilled and the articles doubled. The injunction is followed, and the credulous householder loses what he had in the hope of getting more.

If the conditions are favourable, the sannyāsi while watching the balls through the night disappears with all he can collect, cutting a hole, if necessary, through the mud ceiling or the wattle walls.

III. THE LIVING LINGAM

One day two sannyāsis came to see Sivanarayyan. Each was clad in a scanty loin-cloth, besmeared all over with ashes; and a bag, formed by the ends of a piece of cloth tied together,

hung from the shoulder of each. After some conversation, one of them saying that the *swāmi* (meaning Sivanarayan) ought to be shown the living *lingam*, produced from his bag an iron ring, a magnet, and a piece of stone, to which was given the name Siva. He laid the iron ring on the ground and placed the stone on it. Sitting down at a little distance he commenced washing the magnet, and said: 'O lord Siva, in mercy come forward so that thy glory may be seen of all'. Owing to the unevenness of the ground Siva fell down, and the ring without Siva moved towards the magnet, to the shame and discomfiture of the *sannyāsīs*. Sivanarayan said to them: 'If you wanted Siva to move, why did you not select a smoother surface? But your intention was evil, injurious to yourselves and others. Do not harm people by such deceptions'. The *sannyāsī* left, tongue-tied with shame.

IV. THE DIVINE SCRIPT

A *sannyāsi* and his disciples came to the house of an educated Bengali gentleman at Bhowanipur and prophesied imminent calamity to him and his sons. 'If you do not believe,' he continued, 'try a test. Write this question on a piece of paper, burn it, and put the ashes in my hands.' This was done, and the *sannyāsi* rubbed the ashes on the palms of his hands, which were then

carefully washed and shown to those present. To the terror and amazement of all, on one hand the writing was distinct, 'Sighra Mrityu' ('Death impending'). Doubt was no longer possible, and the sannyāsi was earnestly entreated to remove the evil. Propitiated by much solicitation, he caused a question to be similarly written inquiring as to the means of averting death. The same course was followed as before, but the ashes were placed on a disciple's hand. This time the writing on the palm promised removal of the evil on payment of Rs. 100—to the sannyāsi. The money was paid, and the sannyāsi gave his blessings.

The secret of the mysterious writing was subsequently discovered. Being in the juice of the Indian fig (*vata*) the writing became, as it dried, invisible. When rubbed, the ashes stuck to the gummy juice, and brought out the writing as soon as the hands were washed.

V. THE BLEAT OF A GOAT'S ASHES

A Raja of Upper India fell under the influence of some Brahamachāris. He regarded them with feelings of profound respect and veneration. They induced the Raja to undertake a fire-ceremony (*yajna*) in which a goat, immolated in the fire, would, by supernatural agency, bleat from its ashes. The fire-place was built and a

shed erected over it, under the guidance of the Brahamachāris, whose quarters were constructed just behind the shed and touching it. Admission to these quarters was strictly prohibited to all. On the appointed day the fire-ceremony was celebrated with much pomp and display. The goat was sacrificed, the body cut up and consigned to the fire. The chief of the Brahamachāris repeated many holy texts and called upon the invisible goat to bleat. Wonderful to relate, the muffled bleat of a goat was heard by all present, who immediately prostrated themselves before the holy men and blessed their stars and the stars of their ancestors for the miracle they had witnessed. The chief slapped the Raja's back, and said that by his spiritual powers he had rescued from torments the seven ascendants of the Raja. A promise was also given to save the three lines of the Raja's connection—father's, mother's, and father-in-law's. The Brahamachāris were worshipped with divine honours and rich gifts.

The Raja's son loved truth and had a balanced mind. None but God, he was convinced, had power to call the dead back to life, to create, preserve, or destroy. All powers were His. Moved by this conviction he endeavoured to find out the true explanation of the apparent miracle. He pushed aside the resisting Brahamachāris and forced his way into their sanctum. Inside he saw a heap of loose earth by the side of

a pit, from which emerged a man with a living goat. The pit was found to lead by a gallery to the neighbourhood of the fire, and the mystery was a mystery no longer. He had the *Brahmachāris* seized and brought before the Raja, who in rage and humiliation wanted them to be killed. 'To slay such as you,' cried the Raja, 'is a service to God. For to punish the wicked is to protect the good. But I forgive you this time. Such conduct, if repeated, will work you harm in this world and the next.'

VI. THE VOICE OF THE DIVINE MOTHER

A Raja heard the voice of the divine Mother by the grace of a deceitful *Brahmachāri*. The customary water-pot was consecrated in the name of Mother Durga, and two bumble-bees were introduced into it along with the necessary mango twig before the earthen saucer was placed on the top. After performing worship in due form the Raja, under direction, made a libation of water on the saucer, which caused the insects to hum so loudly that he believed the noise to be the divine voice blessing him. In ecstasy the Raja granted the *Brahmachāri* a pension, which, together with the deception, still continues.

VII. THE MORTAL'S VISION OF THE IMMORTAL

A learned pundit, living in the odour of sanctity, for a fee of Rs. 500 promised to show

a Hindu gentleman of Upper India the god Bhairav. The fee paid, he was led, in the depth of night, to a tree at the end of his village. By torchlight he saw on the tree a fearsome form which spoke to him. That was Bhairav, without doubt, and many gifts were placed at his feet. Enthusiastic over the vision vouchsafed to him he wrote to his brother, a Subādār in the native army, to come and be blessed likewise. The Subādār had by contact with men gained a greater knowledge of the world. He wrote home saying he would soon obtain leave, and requested all things to be kept ready against his coming. On his arrival he repaired by night to the appointed place under the pundit's direction.

'O lord Bhairav,' prayed the pundit to the figure on the tree, 'thy devotee has come for a sight of thee. By thy own merit forgive the evil in him and show thyself.'

The figure remained silent. The Subādār promised an additional Rs. 200 for celebration of the worship. The pundit prayed: 'O Bhairav, this is a devotee of great zeal. He has promised a further sum of Rs. 200 for thy worship. Be gracious to him and speak'.

The Bhairav gave an unearthly yell. The Subādār, that he might be supremely blessed, wished to approach nearer and prostrate himself in adoration.

'Prostrate yourself here,' said the pundit,

trying to dissuade him; 'draw no nearer, else he will be enraged.'

'Let him come down from the tree, and I shall lay on his feet five coins of gold.'

The influence of gold moved the pundit to pray: 'O Lord of mercy, come down from the tree to bless this thy best of devotees'.

The figure descended and stood at the foot of the tree. The Subādār whipped out his sword and went for the god, saying: 'Declare who you are, or I cut you down'.

The figure threw down from his head an inverted black earthen pot pierced with holes, discovered his features, and gasped for breath. Falling at the Subādār's feet the god cried for mercy.

'I am a barber,' he sobbed out, 'acting as the pundit directs; I am innocent, have mercy on me.'

The pundit was seized, and kept a prisoner until he disgorged his ill-gotten gains.

VIII. THE FASTING SAINT OF MOZAFFARPORE

A saint of great repute lived in a Raja's palace not far from Mozaffarpore. In addition to his saintliness he possessed good looks and physical strength. He had led the Raja to believe that he had for the twelve preceding years observed unbroken fast, and stopped the natural functions for the removal of bodily refuse. Daily, with

closed doors, he offered in the sacred fire large quantities of cream and fruit. The holy ashes he solemnly carried to the fields outside the town and buried them in a solitary spot. These ashes none dared touch for fear of the saint's curse. The saint passed his days in peace, and the Raja in the contentment that piety brings. One day a dependent Tālukdār came to the Raja and obtained permission to entertain the saint at his own home. This change of habitation caused no break in the even tenor of the saintly days. For the Tālukdār nowise departed from the rules observed by the Raja in his treatment of the saint.

After some days very finely powdered croton seed was mixed with the cream brought to the unsuspecting saint, for his daily worship. The doors were closed as usual, and the saint engaged in his devotions. In a little while strange sounds from the room assailed the ears of the frightened attendants watching outside, and many feet were running fast to carry news of the unwonted occurrence.

Hurrying to the spot the Tālukdār shouted to the saint to open the door. There was no response. The door was forced, and the saint found lying on the floor in a collapse. Suitable treatment was followed by recovery. In secret the Tālukdār said to the saint: 'My lord, if such practices are resorted to by men like you, what

are we sinful householders to do? While there is life in the body it must be supplied with food as the lighted lamp with oil. When the lamp is out or the life goes back to its origin, neither food nor oil is needed. Our duty it is to hold fast to the all-comprehending God, and supply the reasonable needs of the body'.

'True,' said the shamefaced saint, 'but neither prince nor peasant respects one without some such device.'

'Never mind all that. My unabated hospitality is yours.'

The saint was silent, and secretly left by night.

IX. LAYING GHOSTS

A Brahmachāri, on arrival, found a case of sickness in a well-to-do household. To the master of the house he diagnosed the disease as the work of ghosts. The necessary expenses arranged for, the Brahmachāri promised to let the household hear the sound of fighting between the domiciled ghosts and those commissioned by him to expel them. The patient was removed from the sick-room, which the exorcist filled with smoke and locked as he came out. The family collected outside to hear the din of conflict. None dared approach the room for fear of the unearthly combatants. In trembling hope they heard distinct thuds from the locked room.

Throwing themselves at the exorcist's feet they glorified him, and rejoiced at their deliverance from such malignant spirits. In a little while the ghost-layer unlocked the room, and, entering it by himself, bolted it from within. Soon he came out with his belongings, which had been left inside. He informed the faithful crowd that the earth-bound souls had been sent to heaven. Then he departed with a handsome fee.

Subsequently he confessed that the supernatural agencies were only enormous frogs let out from cloth-bags in his *jhuli* and sent hopping about under the influence of smoke.

X. IN TERROR OF GHOSTS

Not far from Mokameh on the East Indian Railway lived a Zemindar, rich and miserly. His spiritual guide, family priests, and generally his servants and dependants, felt injured by his niggardly life. Mysterious disturbances commenced in his house, which he had no difficulty in attributing to supernatural agency. Bones and filth were scattered about nightly. Life became intolerable. Watches were set, within and outside the house, but the disturbances continued unabated. He turned to the family priest and begged him to sleep in the house, saying: 'We are greatly terrified. Protect us from this dreadful visitation. Stay in the house. Ghosts

dare not approach you'. The priest consented. But after the first night he reported that the ghosts were very powerful.

'Last night,' he continued, 'they were actually carrying me, charpoy (stringed bedstead) and all, right through the roof. With the help of many muttered formulæ I managed to return with the charpoy.'

'Save me,' said the Zemindar, putting on his head the dust off the priest's feet, 'spare no expense.'

His miserliness overcome by supernatural terrors, the Zemindar performed many expensive rites and ceremonies under the direction of his ghostly counsellor, but with no apparent effect on his invisible tormentors. As a last resort he invited to his house ascetics of note from Benares and Hardwar.

The priests with assistants took charge of entertaining the holy men, who, as the events would show, were too well pleased with the attention bestowed on them. After preliminary examination that lasted some days the holy men declared that a large colony of ghosts had established itself in the house, and its dislodgment would involve considerable outlay. Fear loosened the miser's purse; the required ceremonies were performed, and the Zemindar's troubles ended. Restored to peace he dismissed the holy men with bountiful gifts.

But, shortly after, encouraged by the visitors' departure, the ghosts resumed their old practices. The Zemindar with his family passed their nights in the open fields. But the ghosts pursued him there. A well-aimed brickbat coming from a neighbouring cornfield smashed the bowl of his bubble-bubble, scattering the fire on his bed. The same night he left with his family and retainers for Benares. After a short respite the old trouble recommenced. A visit to Hardwar led to no better results. Despair seized the Zemindar.

'Death is upon us,' he said to his assembled household; 'such sumptuous worship of gods and saints has failed to bring help. Let us go home and die.' He returned to the house of his fathers prepared for the worst.

Sivanarayan was staying at Mokameh at this time. By his advice none were allowed to live in the house itself except those of the Zemindar's blood. All night they watched the house, within and without. Their labours were rewarded by the discovery of a confidential servant trying to throw strange things—a human skull and filth—into the Zemindar's sleeping-chamber. When questioned, the servant confessed that he had joined in the conspiracy at the instigation of the family priest and other dependants of the Zemindar. The holy men were won over to the unholy cause, and the brickbat that

smashed the smoking-bowl was aimed by priestly hands.

The Zemindar was constrained to spare his connections, but the others were expelled with ignominy.

GLOSSARY

Agbori. A worshipper of Siva under the name Aghora. A sect of Sivite ascetics, supposed to be addicted to the most disgusting practices.

ākāsa. In Hindu philosophy Space, considered a material reality, of great tenuity. That element of existence which makes vibration possible, and prevents all matter being condensed into a single rigid drop.

āsan. A seat made of matting, skin, or cloth; the resting-place or abode of a wandering ascetic.

Asoka. The flowering tree *Jonesia Asoca*.

ātchālā. (Beng. *āt*, 'eight'; *chālā*, 'thatch'.) A bungalow with eight thatches, i.e. having a double-hipped roof.

Auliya. A holy saint.

Babu. Distinctive appellation of a Northern Indian gentleman, equivalent to the French 'Monsieur'.

bael. The Indian wood-apple, fruit and tree (*Ægle marmelos*).

bāruni. A bathing festival in the Hindu month of Chaitra (March–April), when the moon appears in the 25th lunar mansion on the third day before she is new.

Bhairav. (Skt. 'the terrible one'.) A form of Siva.

bhāng. An intoxicating potion, having the leaves of the Indian hemp for its principal ingredient.

Bhārati. One of the ten monastic orders founded by Sankarāchārya.

Bhubaneswari. A name and form of Durga.

Brāhamaṇchāri. (Skt. *Brāhma*, 'God'; *chāri*, 'practiser'.) (1) One under training in perception of God in all things; (2) a celibate Brahminical disciple; (3) a neophyte attached to an ascetic order within the fold of orthodox Brahminism.

Brāhma. The first person of the Hindu trinity. God viewed as presiding over His creative energy, called *rajas*. Energy is often identified with the consciousness pervading it and

the material basis resisting it, the distinction being regarded as purely intellectual.

chārpoy. (Hind. *chār*, 'four'; *pai*, 'foot'.) A bedstead formed by four upright posts, joined by horizontal bars, over which coarse tapes or rough strings are passed to make the bottom.

chhatra. (Skt. 'umbrella'.) A religious hostelry.

dandi. (Skt. 'staff-bearing'.) A generic designation of the monastic followers of Sankarāchārya.

dasnāmi. (Hind. *dasi*, 'ten'; *nāmi*, 'having name'.) Monks with ten names or sub-orders, claiming Sankarāchārya for founder.

Dattātreya. (Datta of the family of Atri, a Vedic sage and one of the seven patriarchs.) An ancient Hindu sage said to have attained wonderful powers, and deified as an incarnation of Siva.

Devi. A goddess, especially Siva's consort, the many-named and many-formed Durga.

Ganesa. The god with a human body and an elephant's head and trunk, presiding over wisdom, and the remover of obstacles.

gānjā. Indian hemp (*Cannabis Indica*).

Gāyatri. The holy formula of the Brahmin's faith, said to epitomize the whole of the Vedas. It may not be uttered by a sūdra without profanity, visited by dire penalties, temporal and spiritual. In substance it means: 'We meditate upon the intelligence, expressed as Light, the lord of all things, and the internal ruler of individuals'.

ghāt. Masonry steps leading into a river or tank.

Giri. One of the monastic orders founded by Sankarāchārya.

Gorakshanāth. Founder of a religious sect (c. thirteenth century A.D.) aiming at a fusion of Buddhism and Hinduism.

gotra. Brahminical septs, claiming descent from different sages, named in the Vedas.

guru. Teacher, spiritual director.

halwa. A paste made of cooked flour, clarified butter, and sugar.

Hanumān. Rama's general, a monkey divinely born and gifted with miraculous powers. He is associated in the worship of Rama and also separately worshipped.

jetā. Matted hair, sometimes of great length, worn by ascetics, chiefly of the Sivite sects.

jbuli. A bag formed by tying into a knot the four ends of a piece of cloth, carried by religious mendicants, hanging from their shoulders.

Kabir. Founder of a religious sect in Northern India (c. 1450), non-idolatrous, monotheistic, and without caste taking recruits from Hindus and Moslems.

Kailās. The heavenly abode of Siva and his consort Parvati, situated on a peak of the mountain of that name in Tibet.

Kalighat. In the suburbs of Calcutta, containing a famous shrine of Kāli.

Kāmākhyā. A name and form of Durga.

Madhvāchārya. Founder of a religious school of orthodox Brahminism (c. thirteenth century A.D.); maintained distinctness of soul and God, and salvation by devotion to the special incarnation Krishna.

Mahātmā. (Skt. *mahā*, 'great'; *ātmā*, 'soul': 'great soul'.) A high-caste monk, specially of the Sivite sects.

maund. A measure of weight—80 lbs.

māyā. God's powers considered abstracted from the Divine substance, and therefore unreal; illusion, the phenomenal world.

Mohunt. (Hindi form of *moha*, 'illusion'; *anta*, 'end'.) One for whom the illusions of life have ended; the head of a monastery.

mukti. Salvation by realizing God.

Muktināth. A name and form of Siva.

muni. (Skt. 'a man of mind'.) A Hindu sage devoted to spiritual knowledge.

Nāgās. A sect of mendicants noted for carrying weapons and for scantiness of clothing.

Nānak. Usually called Baba or Father Nānak, founder of the Sikh religion (fifteenth century A.D.); taught unity of God to be worshipped with purity of mind, action, beneficence, and non-idolatrous ceremonies.

nāt mandir. A dancing pavilion attached to a temple or idol-house.

neem. The tree *Melia Azad directa*.

nirākāra. (Skt. *nir*, 'privative'; *ākāra*, 'form'.) Formless, applied to the unthinkable, transcendent aspect of the Deity.

nirguna. Attributeless; of similar application as the last.

OM. The mysterious Divine name; the verbal emblem of God.

Paigambar. (Arab. 'prophet'.) Usually applied by Mahomedans to Mahomed, Christ, and the Jewish prophets.

Paramhansa. A monk who has attained the highest spiritual condition.

Pir. A Mahomedan saint.

Prakriti. The totality of God's powers, including the visible universe, but exclusive of the soul.

Puri. One of the ten monastic orders founded by Sankarāchārya.

Purusha. Person, sentience, soul.

Rāmānanda. Pupil of Rāmānuja (q.v.), from whose teachings he departed by abolishing caste restrictions.

Rāmānuja. Founder of a school of Brahminical thought and a Vaishnava sect, worshipping the incarnation Rāma (twelfth century A.D.). He taught that God with His twofold powers—matter and soul—was one, and should be worshipped with love.

Rāmlilā. An open-air passion play, representing incidents in Rāma's life, enacted on the lunar anniversary of his birth in the spring.

Rishi. A sage who discovered a Vedic hymn which, being coeval with time, cannot have an author.

rudrāksha. The fruits of the *Elaeocarpus ganitrus*, which, when dried, are used by the Sivite Hindus as beads for rosaries.

sādhu. 'A true man', a monk, specially of the Vishnuvite sects.

saguna. 'Having attributes', same as *sākāra* (q.v.) in another aspect.

sākāra. 'Having a form', applied to the visible universe, animate and inanimate, considered as an aspect of God.

Sankarāchārya. (The teacher Sankara.) The great Brahminical revivalist and exegetist of the ninth century A.D. He taught the unity of Being, identifying in the order of existence or substance, considered apart from powers and attributes, God, Nature, and Soul.

sannyāsi. (Skt. a man of *sannyās* or renunciation.) A wandering religious mendicant, a monk of Sāṅkarāchārya's order.

Sarvamangalā. (Skt. *sarva*, 'all'; *mangalā*, 'the beneficent one'.) A name and form of Durga.

Sāvitri. Another name for *Gāyatri*.

śāstra. Sacred writings of the Hindus, usually in Sanskrit.

Siva. The third person of the Hindu trinity, God presiding over His destructive energy, called *tamas*.

swāmī. 'Master' or 'sir', distinctive name of all monks and friars.

swarupa. (Skt. *sua*, 'self'; *rupa*, 'form'.) What an object of knowledge is in itself, independently of the knower's thoughts and perceptions.

Tālukdār. A fief-holder under the State or a superior landlord.

tattwas. The elements into which, according to the Hindus, existence can be reduced in terms of the senses and faculties of cognition, e.g.: smell, earth; taste, water; sight, fire; touch, air; hearing, ākāsa; mind, moon; judgment, sun.

tripundra. Three upright bars, curved at the lower ends, painted on the forehead as a sectarian mark.

Vai-kuntha. The heavenly abode of Vishnu.

Vaishnava. A worshipper of Vishnu.

Virāt. 'The Supreme King', God as the universe and its Lord.

Vishnu. The second person of the Hindu trinity, God presiding over His preservative energy, called *sattwa*.

Vishnuswāmi. A Vaishnava religious teacher of Western India, and founder of a monastic order.

Viswanāth. An idol representing Siva, located in the celebrated temple at Benares.

Vyābṛiti. 'Amplification' of OM prefixed to the *Gāyatri*, e.g. OM *bhub* (earth), etc.

Zemindar. One holding land as full owner, subject to payment of revenue to the British Government.

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